

EDWARD D. KISSANE

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BOOK OF  
JOB

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Every difficult passage is subjected to a fresh examination, and often the view suggested is entirely original; but it is particularly refreshing, in view of modern critical tendencies, to find traditional views so often vindicated by the results of modern critical methods.





# THE BOOK OF JOB



# THE BOOK OF JOB

TRANSLATED FROM A CRITICALLY  
REVISED HEBREW TEXT WITH  
COMMENTARY

BY

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NEW YORK  
SHEED & WARD

1946

**Nil Obstat:**

.JOANNES KELLY,  
*Censor Theol. Deputatus.*

**Imprimi potest:**

✠ EDUARDUS,  
*Archiep. Dubiinen.,  
Hiberniae Primas.*

**DUBLINI, die 26<sup>o</sup> Maii, 1939.**

## PREFACE.

The present work was originally written several years ago as a critical commentary on the Hebrew text. But as the expense of publishing a work of such a character was beyond the resources of the writer, the project had to be abandoned. The work has now been entirely re-written, and all the philological discussion omitted, with the exception of the 'Critical Notes' appended to each section. It is hoped that in its present form the work has been brought within the range of the student unacquainted with Hebrew, while the expert is provided with sufficient data to pronounce on the merits of the changes suggested in the Massoretic text.

The delay in publication has not been without its compensations. I have been able to avail of the many valuable studies which have been published in recent years, particularly the works of Peters and of Dhorme. The full philological discussions which are to be found in these two commentaries render it unnecessary to cover the same ground. Nevertheless, the view of the book presented in the present work differs in many respects from those of both Peters and Dhorme, not to mention the writers of the liberal school, and in most of the more difficult passages a different reconstruction of the text, and, consequently, a somewhat different interpretation is given.

I have devoted particular attention to the strophic arrangement of the poems; for, notwithstanding the scepticism of men like Budde and Dhorme, I am convinced that it is of vital importance, not only for the interpretation, but for the restoration of the original text. It is for the reader to judge if the system adopted here is that intended by the writer of Job.

As a general rule, I have refrained from discussing the countless emendations suggested by various critics for the passages which are regarded as corrupt. I have con-

tented myself with indicating the reading which I consider original, and letting the text speak for itself. These emendations are usually based on the reading of the Versions. I have been very sparing of conjecture ; but when it was absolutely necessary I have suggested a reading which follows closely the consonantal text.

I desire to express my gratitude to my colleague Professor O'Flynn, and to Rev. Donal A. Reidy and Rev. Dr. P. F. Cremin of St. Brendan's, Killarney, who read the greater part of the commentary in proof, and helped me with many valuable suggestions and criticisms. I should also like to pay a tribute to the staff of Messrs. Browne and Nolan for their unfailing courtesy and patience. The reader will bear testimony to the excellence of their part in the work.

EDWARD J. KISSANE.

*Ascension Day, 1939.*

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## INTRODUCTION

### I. GENERAL THEME AND PLAN OF THE BOOK.

The scene of the story is laid in the land of Uz, a district of Edom to the south-east of the Dead Sea. Here lived a tribal chief, a patriarch, named Job, a man conspicuous for his piety and the integrity of his life, and blessed by God with worldly prosperity 'above all the children of the East.' His virtues were recognised not only by his fellow-men, but by the members of the heavenly court, and even by God Himself; and his happiness and prosperity were regarded as his due reward.

Suddenly, in the height of his prosperity, Job is smitten by a series of appalling calamities. In a single day he finds himself deprived of all his possessions and of his family (i. 13-19); soon afterwards, his body is attacked by a loathsome disease which covers him with ulcers from head to foot, so that, like a leper, he has to cut himself off from human society (ii. 8).

The cause of this sudden and tragic disaster is a mystery to Job himself. He is conscious of no sin which could have deserved such chastisement; yet, like his contemporaries, he had always lived in the belief that suffering was the result of sin. The reader, however, is let into the secret by the description of the two scenes at the heavenly court (i. 6-12 and ii. 1-7). Job's suffering is not due to any fault of his, but to the jealousy of the Satan. When challenged by God to find a flaw in Job's integrity, he alleged that his piety was due to self-interest, and claimed that if he were afflicted he would 'curse God to His face.' The Satan received permission to put Job to the test, first by depriving him of his wealth and his family, and, when that failed, by afflicting his person. But Job remained steadfast in his piety, even under the stress of his double

calamity ; even when his wife turned against him, his answer was an expression of perfect resignation to the will of God (ii. 10).

On the arrival of his three friends, who come to condole with him in his misfortune (ii. 11-13), Job gives way to a passionate outburst on the misery of his lot, and longs for the peace of Sheol as preferable to his life of torture (iii. 1-26). This speech is the opening of a debate between Job and his three friends in which the whole problem of retribution is discussed, with special reference to Job's case. Each of the friends speaks in turn, and is answered by Job, and the debate continues through three complete cycles of such speeches. The main theme of the speeches of the three friends is that suffering is invariably the result of sin ; Job's suffering is a call to repentance, and only by this means can he hope to recover his former happiness. Refusal to repent will mean his ruin. Job strenuously denies that this theory meets his case ; for he has committed no sin which could have deserved such chastisement. As the debate ends, the solution of the problem is no nearer. Job has succeeded in convincing his opponents of his innocence, and they retire from the contest, leaving the problem unsolved.

At this stage a new speaker intervenes in the person of Elihu (xxxii.-xxxvii.), who is represented as an impetuous young man in contrast to the hoary sages who have just finished speaking. He first quotes and refutes a number of statements made by Job in the earlier stage of the debate, and then gives his solution of the general problem of the suffering of the just, ending with a speech in which he celebrates the marvellous wisdom and power of God.

Finally, Jahweh Himself addresses Job 'out of the storm,' and overwhelms him with questions regarding the constitution of the universe, the phenomena of nature, the habits and instincts of animals (xxxviii.-xxxix.). In a second speech, He describes the two most formidable representatives of the animal creation, the Behemoth and the Leviathan (xl.-xli.). Each speech is followed by a brief reply on the part of Job, in which he acknowledges

his incapacity to understand the workings of Divine Providence (xl. 4-5; xlii. 2-6).

At this point the prose narrative is resumed (xlii. 7-17). Jahweh commends Job for the view he expressed regarding God's action, and rejects the view expressed by his three friends. Then Job is restored to health and happiness, and blessed with prosperity twice as great as before. All his friends return, and renew the old relations, and after a long life 'Job died old and full of days.'

From this brief summary it is apparent that the book contains five main divisions:—

- I. *The Prologue* (i.-ii.), which describes Job's piety, his misfortunes, and the coming of his three friends.
- II. *The Dialogue* (iii.-xxxi.), which consists of three cycles of speeches, each cycle consisting of a speech by each of the three friends followed by Job's reply.  
In the present text the third cycle of speeches is incomplete, but this is due to a later disarrangement of the text.
- III. *The Speeches of Elihu* (xxxii.-xxxvii.), preceded by a special introduction in prose.
- IV. *The Speeches of Jahweh* (xxxviii.-xlii. 6), together with Job's brief replies.
- V. *The Epilogue* (xlii. 7-17), which gives Jahweh's judgment on the merits of the discussion, and describes the subsequent history of Job.

To these must be added the *Poem on Wisdom* (xxviii.), which now forms part of the Dialogue, but is probably an independent composition inserted because of its bearing on the problem of the mysteries of Divine Providence.

The scene of the story is laid in Edom, and the time is the patriarchal age. All the details of the story are made to correspond with this ideal setting. Job is a tribal chief like Abraham, whose wealth consisted of flocks and herds (i. 5; xlii. 8); both he and his three friends live to a very advanced age (xlii. 16; cf. xv. 10). There is no allusion

to the temple or to a levitical priesthood ; on the contrary, the patriarch himself is priest and the only sacrifice mentioned is the burnt-offering (i. 5 ; xlii. 8). The coin (*gesitah*) mentioned in xlii. 11 is another detail which marks the patriarchal age (*cf.* Gen. xxxiii. 19 ; Jos. xxiv. 32).

In the Prologue, Job, his wife, the messenger, and Satan use the name *Elohim* for God ; in the Dialogue the names used are *El* (55), *Eloah* (41), *Shaddai* (31), and *Elohim* (6), all of which were employed in the patriarchal age. The writer himself, in the narrative passages, uses the name *Jahweh*, which indicates that he is an Israelite. But though the characters in the Dialogue are non-Israelites, the whole problem is discussed from the Israelite standpoint, and each of the speeches bears the marks of Jewish thought and culture.

It is obvious that the purpose of the book is didactic rather than historical. The very nature of the Dialogue is sufficient proof of this. Each speech is a highly finished poem, and there is a certain artificiality in the manner in which each speaker intervenes, and an absence of the spontaneity of a real debate. Job on the one hand, and the three friends on the other, follow parallel lines, and each speaker develops his argument with little reference to the arguments already advanced on either side.

The artificial character of the Prologue and Epilogue is equally apparent. The two heavenly councils, the numbers of Job's family and of his flocks, the stereotyped formulae which are employed to describe Job's calamities, the seven days' mourning and silence before the debate begins, are all indications that the writer's object is to give an ideal setting to the discussion which is to follow, rather than to describe an actual occurrence. He paints a picture of an ideally perfect man who has suddenly fallen from the highest grade of happiness to the lowest degree of misery, without having committed any sin to deserve such misfortune.<sup>1</sup>

But it is probable that the writer worked on traditional

<sup>1</sup> *Cf.* the statement in the Talmud : ' Job was only a figure (*mashal*) ' — *Baba bathra*, 15, 1.



materials. The existence of a man named Job is attested by Ezechiel, who couples him with Noe and Daniel as three men noted for their piety (Ezech. xiv. 14, 20; cf. Eccclus. xlix. 9; *James* v. 11). But how much of the story was derived from tradition, and how much is due to the fancy of the writer, it is impossible to say. The writer's primary concern was not with historical details, but with the moral problem, which he discusses through the medium of the various speakers who take part in the debate.

It has been suggested that the writer may have borrowed some of his materials from the Babylonian poem *Ludlul bel nimeqi* ('I will praise the lord of wisdom'), which Ball does not hesitate to call the 'Babylonian Job.'<sup>1</sup> This poem deals with the pious king Shubshi-meshri-nergal, who was stricken with a disease which entailed great suffering. Eventually, Marduk intervened and restored him to health. There are indeed many striking parallels between this poem and Job, particularly the passages in which he describes his sufferings. But the purpose is entirely different. The Babylonian poem is really a hymn of thanksgiving for recovery from sickness, and its closest analogy is to be found, not in the book of Job, but in the Psalms on the same theme.

## II. THE PROBLEM DISCUSSED IN THE BOOK.

The Book of Job is a discussion of the problem of retribution—the apparent contradiction between the doctrine of the justice of God and the facts of human experience. If God is just, why is it that the innocent sometimes suffer, and the wicked prosper? The question was one which caused perplexity to many of the Old Testament writers, and arose inevitably out of their conviction of the justice of God and their concept (or rather their want of knowledge) of the future life.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dhorme, *Choix de Textes assyrobabyloniens*, pp. 372-379. Rawlinson, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of W. Asia*, iv. 67. Langdon, *Babylonian Wisdom*, London, 1923. S. Landsdorfer, *Ein babylonische Quelle für das Buch Hiob?* Freiburg 1, B. 1911. M. Jastrow, A Babylonian Parallel to Hiob, *J. B. L.* xxv. (1906), pp. 135 ff.

I. *Origin of the Problem.*

The doctrine that God will render to every man according to his works (Matt. xvi. 27; Rom. ii. 6; 1 Cor. iii. 8) creates no problem in the light of New Testament revelation, for God's final judgment is assigned to the life after death. But for the Hebrews, at least down to a very late period,<sup>1</sup> such a conception was impossible, for they had no knowledge of the real nature of the life beyond the grave. They believed in the survival of the soul, but made no distinction between the state of the just and that of the wicked. Sheol is man's eternal home (Eccles. xii. 5), the house of assembly for all the living without distinction (Job xxx. 23). It is a place of darkness and oblivion, where the disembodied spirit endures in a shadowy existence little better than non-existence—'a living dog is better than a dead lion' (Eccles. ix. 4). The dead are cut off from the knowledge of all earthly things, and they can neither know nor praise God (Ps. vi. 6; xxx. 10; lxxxviii. 11; Is. xxxviii. 18). There is no distinction of class; the master and the slave, the prince and the pauper, the good and the bad all have a common destiny (Eccles. ix. 2; cf. Job iii. 11ff). From all these passages it is clear that the concept of Sheol was purely negative, the exclusion of everything associated with life on earth.

On the other hand, Jahweh had revealed Himself as 'a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children . . . of them that hate Me, and showing mercy to thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments' (Ex. xx. 5-6). If God is just, and rewards the good, and punishes the wicked, and if the possibility of retribution after death is incompatible with the concept of Sheol, the natural inference seemed to be that He distributed His rewards and chastisements *in this life*.

This inference, namely, that God rewards the just and

<sup>1</sup> The Book of Wisdom, which gives the clearest statement of the doctrine of retribution after death, is much later than Job (100-60 B.C.). The same doctrine is, according to some critics, contained in some of the Psalms (xvii. xlix. lxxiii.) but the date of these is uncertain, and the meaning is not beyond all doubt.

punishes the wicked in this life, did not occasion very much difficulty as long as retribution was considered in relation to the nation (or tribe or family). For God had promised the nation prosperity in return for obedience to the Law, and threatened ruin for infidelity (Deut. iv. 25ff, 40; vii. 12f, 19f); and the varying fortunes of the people were regarded as in direct relation to the nation's fidelity to the Law. In fact, the books of Judges and Kings were written to illustrate the working out of this law of retribution in the history of Israel. Naturally, the innocent sometimes suffered with the guilty; but they were members of the same sinful group, and their fate gave rise to no anxious doubts regarding God's justice.

It was only when the idea of individual responsibility had been developed by the teaching of the prophets,<sup>1</sup> and the law of retribution in this life extended to the individual, that doubts began to arise. In the case of the individual, as in the case of the nation, the popular mind saw an intimate connection between sin and suffering, between virtue and happiness. The prosperous man was regarded as enjoying the blessings of God as the reward of his virtues; the unfortunate was 'stricken by God,' punished for his own crimes or for those of his parents. This is the ethical background of the Psalms and Proverbs,<sup>2</sup> and we find echoes of it even as late as the New Testament period, as when the disciples asked our Lord: 'Who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?' (John ix. 2).

But it was inevitable that the doctrine when applied to the individual should create difficulty. The theory was not borne out by the facts of human life. Ecclesiastes observed that 'there were righteous men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there are wicked to whom it happeneth according to the work of the just' (viii. 14), and his experience led him to deny the existence of retribution in this life (ix. 1). We

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Is. iii. 10-11; xi. 4; xxxiii. 14-15; Jer. xxxi. 29-30; Ezech. xviii.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ps. i.; v. 5ff; vii. 10-12; x. 15-18; xi. 5-7; xviii. 21-28, etc; Prov. x. 6-7; 25-30; xi. 3-8, etc.

find the same anxious doubts expressed in some of the Psalms.<sup>1</sup> Among the prophets, Jeremias is the first to draw attention to this problem, which the circumstances of his own life and of that of his contemporaries presented in a striking form. When he considers what he has been made to suffer at the hands of his renegade brethren, he makes this complaint to Jahweh :

Righteous art Thou, Jahweh,  
 When I contend with Thee,  
 Yet would I reason the cause with Thee :  
 Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper ?  
 Why are they at ease that deal treacherously ?  
 Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root,  
 They grow, yea, they bring forth fruit ;  
 Thou art near in their mouth,  
 And far from their heart ;  
 But Thou, Jahweh, knowest me,  
 Thou seest me, and triest my heart towards Thee.  
(Jer. xii. 1-3).<sup>2</sup>

## *2. Traditional or Popular Solution.*

With regard to the suffering of the just, a favourite solution was that the suffering would be of brief duration, and would soon be followed by relief and happiness. This was particularly the case where there was question of the oppression of the poor and the meek by unscrupulous tyrants. God seemed to 'hide His face' for a moment, but in due time He would intervene to overthrow the oppressors and deliver the just (*cf.* Ps. ix. 19ff ; xxxvii. 6ff ; Prov. xii. 5). But such a solution did not meet the case where the just man suffered from bodily infirmity, or met with misfortune through natural causes. In such cases, according to the Hebrew ideas, the suffering was due to the direct action of God. How can God's action in such circumstances be justified ?

The principle which supplied the answer was found

<sup>1</sup> *Cf.* Ps. xxxvii. xlix. lxxiii.    <sup>2</sup> *Cf.* Hab. i. 2ff ; 13ff.

in the distinction between 'sins of ignorance' and 'sins committed with a high hand' (Num. xv. 23-30). The latter were deliberate violations of God's law, and the delinquent thereby cut himself off from the chosen people of God (30-31). The former were minor faults due to want of advertence or to ignorance<sup>1</sup>: but even for these minor faults a sacrifice of expiation had to be offered before the person recovered his full rights (27).

The same distinction is to be found in Psalm xix. 12-14. Having sung of the excellence of the Law, the Psalmist continues:

Likewise thy servant is warned by them,  
In keeping them is great reward;  
*Errors* who can perceive?  
From *hidden* (sins) hold me innocent;  
Likewise from *proud* men keep Thy servant,  
Let them not have dominion over me.

Here the writer claims that he has been scrupulously obedient to the precepts of the Law; yet he admits that he may have been guilty of 'errors' or 'hidden sins,' and for these he begs forgiveness. In contrast with law-abiding men like the Psalmist are the 'proud' or rebels against God (Ps. cxix. 51, 69, 78, 85, 122). They are the same as those described in Numbers as sinning 'with a high hand.' 'Error' is the technical term for 'sin of ignorance.' In many other Psalms the same distinction is implied. For sometimes the Psalmist asks pardon for the sins which have been the cause of his affliction, yet distinguishes himself from the 'evil-doers' or the 'wicked' (cf. vi. 2, 9; xxxviii. 2, 21; xxxix. 2, 9). In other words, he recognises that a man may be one of the 'pious' or the 'just,' and yet be not free from minor faults, committed without deliberation or advertence, which need expiation. Ecclesiastes also, in an obscure passage, seems to distinguish between 'errors' and sins which call down God's wrath (Eccles. v. 5).

In accordance with this principle, no man, however

<sup>1</sup> See the definition of 'sins of ignorance' in Lev. v. 18 (cf. iv. 13-14) as sins which a man commits 'without his knowledge.'

pious and just, is immune from liability to suffering ; for no man is entirely without sin. This is explicitly stated by Ecclesiastes : ' There is not a just man upon the earth, that doth good and sinneth not ' (Eccles. vii. 20). If no man is without sin, no man is without liability to suffering, which is the consequence of sin, and God is not acting unjustly if He demands expiation for such sins. Thus, according to the popular view, the general principle that suffering is the consequence of sin admits of no exception ; and the suffering of a just man is quite consistent with the justice of God, because he is being chastised for minor faults committed without advertence.

It was possible to apply the same principle to some extent, to the problem of the prosperity of the wicked. For just as one may appear just to men, yet be guilty of minor indeliberate sins for which he is liable to suffer, so one may be regarded by his fellows as one of the ' wicked,' when in reality his sins have been committed through ignorance or inadvertence. He is not one of the ' wicked,' and hence he is allowed to enjoy prosperity (*cf.* Job xxxiv. 29-32). But there were cases in which this explanation was impossible. There were wicked men who openly defied God, and wantonly oppressed their fellow-men, and yet God did not intervene to punish them, but allowed them to enjoy happiness and success (*cf.* Eccles. viii. 10-14 ; Ps. lxxxiii. 1-9). Here there was no place for the distinction between deliberate and indeliberate sins. In such cases, pious souls could merely console themselves with the thought that God would intervene in His own good time. The success of the wicked would be of brief duration, and would be followed by sudden and complete disaster. ' Fret not thyself because of evil-doers . . . for they shall soon be cut down like the grass ' is the advice given to those who are disturbed by doubts regarding the justice of God (Ps. xxxvii. 1 ; *cf.* xxxvii. 9ff ; xlix. 13ff ; lxxiii. 18ff). Unlike the just, who has hope of recovering from misfortune by repentance and prayer, the wicked is without hope ; when disaster comes his ruin will be definite and final (*cf.* Prov. xxiv. 16).

### 3. *The Treatment of the Problem in Job.*

In the Book of Job, the problem is treated in a single concrete case, and the various aspects of the problem and the solutions offered are presented in the speeches of the different characters—Job, his three friends, Elihu and Jahweh. The views of the writer himself are expressed in the prose narrative. In the Prologue he presents the case in such a manner as to leave no doubt that the friends' explanation of Job's misfortune is inadmissible; and in the Epilogue, he represents Jahweh as approving of Job's views on the problem and rejecting those of the friends. We shall now examine the different views in detail.

a) *The three friends.* The three friends represent the current teaching of the 'wise,' who claim for their views the authority of a venerable tradition going back to the primitive inhabitants of the land (xv. 18-19). The general principle is enunciated by Eliphaz:

Reflect now, who that was innocent ever perished?  
And where were the upright cut off?  
As I have seen, they that plough iniquity,  
And sow trouble reap it (lv. 7-8).

This doctrine is echoed by Bildad (viii. 3), and by Sophar (xi. 20). The innocent, on the other hand, are under God's protection: 'God doth not reject the upright' (viii. 20); 'they are secure, because there is hope' (xi. 19). The friends admit that the just may suffer, but God will not 'reject' them, as He rejects the wicked; they have hope of recovery by repentance. But why does God permit them to suffer at all? The answer is contained in their treatment of Job's case.

They admit that Job is one of the 'just.' This is expressly stated by Eliphaz: 'Is not thy piety thy confidence, and the perfection of thy ways thy hope?' (iv. 6), and is implied in the friends' exhortation to repentance. For it is only the just who can recover their happy state by repentance; the wicked have nothing



to look forward to but a miserable death (iv. 8-9; viii. 22; xi. 20). But Job has unwittingly offended God, and for these faults he must do penance. For no man is without sin. Man is naturally impure compared with God (iv. 17-21; xv. 14-15; xxv. 5-6); 'man is born a wild ass's colt' (xi. 12). He is therefore liable to suffer; 'trouble is as natural to him as flight to a bird' (v. 7). Job himself may not be conscious of these faults; but God's knowledge goes deeper (xi. 5ff), and He knows man better than he knows himself (xi. 11ff; xv. 7-11; xxii. 12ff; xxv.; xxvi. 5-14). He alone is to choose whether He is to overlook these faults or to demand their expiation (xi. 10). Eliphaz even points out the acts of negligence of which Job has been guilty—his failure to redress the wrongs of the oppressed and to succour the needy (xxii. 5-10). Job's troubles are a warning to repentance, and by complying with this warning he can recover his former happy state (v. 17ff; viii. 21; xi. 13ff; xxii. 21ff). By refusal to repent and by showing resentment at God's action, he will become a real 'sinner,' and must expect a sinner's fate (v. 1ff; xxii. 15ff).

The friends' treatment of the prosperity of the wicked also follows traditional lines. The wicked may thrive for a time, but this happiness is only apparent. For he is a prey to continual anxiety, knowing that his ruin is inevitable (xv. 20-21). In the height of his prosperity trouble will come upon him; he will be reduced to poverty, he will be smitten with grievous bodily ailments, he will meet with sudden and premature death. His ruin will involve his family and his kinsmen, and his name will be forgotten (viii. 11ff; xv. 21ff; xviii. 5ff; xx. 22ff).

b) *Job*. Job's views on the existence of retribution in this life are the direct antithesis of those of his three friends. As Bildad reminds him (xxvi. 2ff), and as he himself admits (xxxi. 1-4), he too, in the days of his prosperity, shared the view that adversity was only for the wicked, and that virtue was a guarantee of happiness and prosperity. His blameless life should therefore have

entitled him to the enjoyment of unbroken happiness, until death came after a serene old age (xxix. 18-20). But his experience has brought disillusion: 'he looked for good, but evil came' (xxx. 26). His misfortunes have compelled him to revise his original opinions; for he is convinced of his innocence, yet he is made to endure the most appalling misery. The doctrine that suffering is the result of sin is not true in his case. His friends do him a grievous wrong by arguing from his sufferings to his sin (xvi. 2ff; xix. 5); in accusing him they are guilty of special pleading on God's behalf, defending God's honour by calumniating Job (xiii. 7-8; xix. 5). He admits that no man can be just in comparison with God (ix. 2), and that he may have been guilty of the 'iniquities of youth' (xiii. 26); but such trifling faults cannot account for the terrible disaster which has befallen him, and he challenges his friends to point out any 'errors' which might have been the cause of such suffering as his (vi. 24). They cannot put him in the category of the wicked because of his intemperate language (vi. 3, 26; xix. 4), for it is not, as they allege, the expression of his resentment against God (xv. 4, 12), but the instinctive reaction of his nature against undeserved and intolerable suffering (vi. 3ff).

The absence of retribution in his own case leads Job to question the friends' general thesis. He counters Eliphaz's question 'Who that was innocent ever perished?' (iv. 7) with the statement that 'the just man is a laughing-stock' (xii. 4), and that 'they that know God' have to endure oppression, hardship, hunger and thirst (xxiv. 5-11). Against Eliphaz's assertion (xv. 34):

The company of the wicked shall be barren,  
And fire shall consume the tents of bribery;

he sets the exact opposite (xii. 6):

The tents of the robbers are prosperous,  
And they that provoke God are secure.

In the final speech of the third Cycle, he enunciates his own views on this matter, and gives a comprehensive

refutation of the statements of the three friends on the fate of the wicked :

Wherefore do the wicked live,  
Increase, nay, wax mighty in wealth ?  
Their seed is established before them,  
Their offspring and their kinsmen before their eyes ;  
Their houses are safe, without fear,  
The rod of God is not upon them ;  
Their bull gendereth, and faileth not,  
Their cow calveth, and doth not miscarry ;  
They send forth their young ones like a flock,  
And their children dance ;  
They sing to the timbrel and the harp,  
And make merry to the sound of the pipe (xxi. 7-12).

In the rest of the speech he refutes point by point the statements made by his opponents : the wicked are not cut off by sudden calamity, as they have claimed ; they live out their days in happiness, and die after serene old age (13-14). Their prosperity is not insecure ; misfortune rarely troubles them (16-21). If they do suffer, it is not because of their crimes, for some never suffer at all (22-26). It is not true that their name is forgotten, for they are buried with honour, and their memory is cherished (27-34).

Job has been compelled to seek a new explanation of his own sufferings, and to recast his views on God's general dealings with men. He is now convinced that man's happiness or misery has no relation to his moral conduct. A man's innocence or virtue will not save him from misfortune ; in the case of war or plague the innocent perish with the guilty (ix. 22-23). The true explanation of the suffering of the just is that God has assigned to each one his lot in life without regard to his merits or demerits. For He controls the destinies of nations and individuals (xii. 13ff) ; He assigns to each one his life-span like the period of service of a soldier or a slave (vii. 1-3).

In Job's own case, God decreed from his very creation that, whether he were wicked or virtuous, his life should be one of misery (x. 14ff), and so the lot assigned to him has

been 'months of woe and nights of trouble' (vii. 3; cf. xiv. 1). Thus he must suffer notwithstanding his innocence, for no man can change what God has decreed (xxiii. 13-14).

Similarly, the fate of the wicked has no relation to their conduct. If the traditional teaching presented by the friends were correct, *all* the wicked would suffer the same fate. But actually, the same anomalies occur in the case of the wicked which are to be seen in the case of the just. Though some may receive the penalty of their crimes, others enjoy a life of complete happiness:

One dieth in his full strength,  
Wholly at ease and content,  
His thighs are full of fat,  
And the marrow of his bones is moist;  
Another dieth in bitterness of soul,  
And never tasted happiness (xxi. 23-25).

Yet Job does not deny the justice of God. He is convinced that if God were to judge his case, and give him an opportunity of speaking in his own defence, He would recognise his innocence (ix. 32ff; xiii. 18; xxiii. 2-6). His complaint is, not that God is unjust, but that He fails to intervene in judgment. If God were to appoint definite times for trial and judgment, his own fate would be different, and the fate of the wicked would be just as the three friends so often described (xxiv. 1, 17ff). It is for this intervention that he appeals in all his early speeches (vii. 17ff; x. 2, 22; xiv. 6), that he may have some respite from suffering before death comes. His cry for redress is already in heaven appealing to God to vindicate him against the calumnies of his opponents; but God refuses to hear, and he must die without hope of happiness (xvi. 18ff).

But even in his most despondent mood, when he has lost all hope of recovery, he still clings to this belief in the justice of God. God will eventually intervene to judge the affairs of men; and though he will then be no more, if he were privileged to see God in judgment, he would see one who is his friend and not his foe (xix. 23-27).<sup>1</sup> This

<sup>1</sup> For the interpretation of this difficult passage see the commentary.

is the nearest approach made in the Dialogue to the true solution of the problem—the suggestion that, though God does not bestow upon man the reward of his virtues during his life, yet He will do him some measure of justice after his death. But the thought of eternal rewards and punishments finds no place in the Dialogue.

To sum up, the fruit of the discussion in the Dialogue is wholly negative. Job has refuted the contention of the three friends that suffering is always the result of sin, and maintained that God allots happiness and pain without regard to a man's moral character. But this leaves the problem unsolved. For no attempt is made by Job to reconcile his suffering with the doctrine of the justice of God. He merely establishes the fact that the theory on which he had hitherto relied has broken down and proved inadequate.

c) *Elihu.* Elihu intervenes because the three elders have failed to confute Job, and by their silence seem to acquiesce in Job's statement of his case. But to admit Job's innocence seems to imply injustice on the part of God (xxxii. 3). Elihu claims to be able to succeed where the elders have failed ; but, in reality, he covers practically the same ground, though in a more logical and systematic manner. His chief concern is to defend the doctrine of the justice of God, and to show that Job's sufferings are quite compatible with it. His speeches give the impression of an orderly treatise, in which the whole subject is reviewed ; but, in the ultimate analysis, he differs but little, if at all, from the view presented by the three friends of Job.<sup>1</sup> His argument may be summarised as follows :—

1. God is just. He is the creator of all men, and therefore His judgment is impartial ; He is omnipotent, therefore nothing can prevent the execution of His decrees ; He is omniscient, therefore His judgment is infallible (xxxiv. 10ff).

2. Job's case is no exception to the general rule. For he is by no means as innocent as he claims ; his dreams and his sickness are themselves warnings which call upon him to

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the obscurity of many passages leaves the text open to different interpretations.

repent (xxxiii. 13-22). Elihu even suggests the particular crimes which have been the cause of his calamity, viz. his neglect to succour the oppressed (xxxv).

3. But Elihu is aware that there are apparent exceptions to the regular course of God's justice—the wicked are sometimes spared, and the just suffer. The former he explains as due to the exercise of God's mercy towards one whose sins were really due to ignorance or inadvertence, and who has expiated them by sincere repentance (xxxiv. 29c-32.)<sup>1</sup> In other words, Elihu applies the same principle which the three friends invoked to explain the suffering of the just. The wicked man in the case is not a deliberate sinner; he has been 'beguiled,' i.e., his sin has been due to inadvertence, not to deliberate malice.

Of the suffering of the just his explanation is substantially the same as that of Eliphaz (iv.-v.). If a just man be 'held captive in the bonds of affliction,' it is in order to reveal to him the fact that he has sinned without his knowledge. If he repent, he will be restored to happiness, if he refuse, he will suffer the fate of the wicked and die prematurely (xxxvi. 8-15). This has been the motive of God's action in Job's case. He had been negligent in his duty towards the poor and the oppressed, and because of this negligence he has been tried by affliction (xxxvi. 21).

4. In his final speech, Elihu describes the marvellous power and wisdom of God as manifested in the phenomena of nature, especially in the rain and the thunder. This is usually taken by critics to be an anticipation of Jahweh's First Speech. But it is more likely that the object is the same as that of Sophar's Speech on the same subject (xi.), namely, to prove that God may have knowledge of sins of which Job himself is unaware. This seems to be the meaning both of the opening and of the closing verses. God is a 'teacher,' and He is able to 'exalt'; that is, He can reveal Job's sins, and He can restore Him to happiness after due repentance (xxxvi. 22-23). His justice is not to be impugned; men must conclude that when He sends suffering, it is not without adequate reason (xxxvii. 23-24).

<sup>1</sup> The text is very obscure owing to corruption. See commentary.

d) *Jahweh*. Jahweh's reply to Job's challenge consists of two speeches; the first has for its theme the Wisdom of God, the second, the Power of God.

In the course of the debate, Job had sometimes used language which was lacking in reverence, and even bordered on blasphemy. While not expressly attributing injustice to God, he found fault with His administration of the universe. The wicked prosper and the just suffer because God does not intervene in Judgment. He should at least appoint definite times of trial, when both the just and the wicked would receive their deserts (xxiv. 1ff). Job even alleged that God's failure to intervene was due to the fact that He was unaware of what was happening on earth (xxiv. 17ff). The purpose of the two speeches is to rebuke Job for thus questioning the propriety of God's action, and to teach him that if God fails to reward the just and to punish the wicked in this life it is not because He is lacking in power and wisdom.

How can Job challenge the wisdom of One who has designed the whole fabric of the universe—heaven and earth and sea, day and night; the range of whose knowledge extends to the ends of the earth and to the depths of Sheol; who controls the recurring phenomena of nature—light and darkness, snow and hail and lightning, rain and dew and frost (xxxviii. 1-30). What does Job know about all these things—of their nature, their origin, and the laws which govern them? What does he know of the extraordinary instincts of animals—of the lion and the raven, the rock-goats and hinds, of the wild ass and the wild ox? (xxxviii. 39-xxxix. 30).

Job has spoken as if he were better qualified than God to curb the power of the wicked. Let him give a manifestation of his power! The Behemoth and the Leviathan are creatures like Job himself, yet even the mightiest dare not risk battle with them. Who can then resist Him who is their creator? (xl.-xli.). Job in his halting reply confesses that he had spoken rashly concerning God's wisdom and power (xlii. 1-6).

The Speeches make no *direct* reference to the problem



discussed in the Dialogue. Neither Job's piety, nor his suffering is mentioned, and, consequently, there is no solution suggested of the problem which his sufferings involves. The contribution which this section of the book makes is *negative and indirect*. The implication in the First Speech is that the suffering of the just, like all the phenomena of the universe, enters into the scheme of Divine Providence; but the motive of God's action in an individual case remains a mystery. The aim of the Speeches is not to penetrate this mystery, but to show that man is to accept God's will with humility and resignation, without questioning the propriety of God's action. The lesson of the Second Speech is that if God spares the wicked, it is not because He is wanting in power to overthrow them.

The Speeches of Jahweh form the natural complement to the Dialogue. On the one hand, the writer teaches that suffering is not always the result of sin (Dialogue), and on the other, that it is not due to God's want of knowledge of the just man's distress, nor want of power to intervene on his behalf. But in neither case does the writer give any *positive* solution of the problem.

e) *The Epilogue*. The Epilogue brings the whole discussion to a conclusion. Jahweh condemns Eliphaz and his companions, because they have not spoken right concerning Him as His servant Job had (xlii. 7). This does not mean that everything said by Job was right and everything said by the three friends was wrong. They were perfectly sincere in their efforts to defend the honour of God, and in this regard, worthy of commendation; Job, on the other hand, deserved Jahweh's rebuke for the intemperance of his language. The statement must be understood in relation to the main theme of the discussion. It is an endorsement of Job's contention that suffering is not always the result of sin, and that there is not a necessary connection between sins and suffering, or between happiness and virtue. This is probably to be regarded as the writer's own view on the problem, and beyond this negative solution the teaching of the book does not go. Its importance

lies in the fact that it prepares the way for the fuller revelation, viz., that the true reward of the just is not temporal prosperity, but eternal life in the presence of God.

We may summarise the teaching of the book on the problem of the suffering of the just as follows :

i. The suffering of the just is not the result of sins of ignorance or inadvertence. This follows from Jahweh's judgment on the merits of the debate (Dialogue and Epilogue).

ii. The suffering of the just must not be attributed to injustice on the part of God (Elihu).

iii. The suffering of the just must not be attributed to want of wisdom and power on the part of God (Jahweh).

iv. No positive solution of the problem is attempted. The motive of God's action in an individual case is a mystery. In the case of Job, the writer lifts the veil in the Prologue, and reveals the real cause of his misfortunes ; but this has been done to provide the setting for the debate, and is not of general application.

### III. THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOOK.

The Book of Job, like most of the other books of the Old Testament has not escaped the attention of what has been aptly called 'surgical criticism.' Many critics of the liberal school claim to be able to trace the influence of several hands in its composition ; and, in addition, they would eliminate a very large number of passages—clauses, verses and groups of verses—as interpolations of a later date. The principal sections in dispute are : the Prologue and Epilogue, the Poem on Wisdom, the Speeches of Elihu, and the Speeches of Jahweh, in whole or in part. If all these disputed sections were omitted, it is calculated that the book would be reduced to less than half its present size.

Let us first consider the shorter passages. It is undeniable that the possibility of later interpolations must be reckoned with. In this respect Job is in no way different from the other books. But very often the grounds on which a passage

is eliminated as a gloss are so frivolous as to be scarcely worthy of consideration. In the commentary, I have not considered it necessary to defend the authenticity of every disputed passage; it should be sufficient to show that the passage (sometimes with slight emendations) is in perfect accord with the context, and is demanded by the poetical structure. But a few general remarks may be made here on the reasons usually assigned by critics for their conclusions.

a) Probably the greatest harm has been done by critics who reconstruct the text in accordance with a metrical theory. It is obvious, for example, that if it were true that the original text contained only verses of two *stichoi*, we should hold that wherever a triplet occurs in the present text one line must be omitted as a later gloss. This is the view taken by Bickell, Duhm and Hölscher.<sup>1</sup> The same critics divide the text into strophes of two verses throughout, and any verse which does not fit into this scheme has to be discarded. These excisions are made in the name of a theory which is a mere hypothesis, and is at variance with the evidence presented not only by the present book of Job, but by the other poetical books of the Old Testament.

b) Sometimes a passage is rejected as spurious because of the apparent want of connection with the context. This is a very natural procedure, provided all the other possibilities of accounting for the obscurity of the text have been exhausted. For the apparent want of connection with the context may be due to several causes—the difficulty of the language, the obscurity of the thought, corruption of the text, or the accidental displacement of a verse. All these causes must be carefully examined, and in the last resort, it is sometimes better to confess one's ignorance than to reject the disputed passage as a gloss.<sup>2</sup>

The difficulty of the language is well known. The book

<sup>1</sup> Out of the total of 52 lines which compose Job's opening speech (iii.), Hölscher omits no less than eight. In Richter's 'emended' text of iii. 4-9, the metre is flawless; but not a single verse except the last has escaped emendation or transposition or both. (Cf. *Textstudien zum Buche Hiob*, p. 3.)

<sup>2</sup> From the very nature of the case, the fact that a passage is obscure or unintelligible is rather against the probability that it is a gloss.

contains a large number of rare words and words used in an unusual sense ; but the study of the kindred languages is continually lessening the difficulties in this matter. The argument is sometimes very subtle, and this sometimes led to the misunderstanding of the text by the scribe, and its consequent corruption. It is remarkable how often the change of a single letter or a different division of the consonants brings order out of chaos. The possibility of accidental displacement of a clause or verse will be discussed in the section on the Massoretic Text. It is wrong to omit the passage altogether if it fills an obvious lacuna elsewhere, and satisfies the requirements in sense, grammatical structure and metre.

c) Critics who reject passages for no other reason than that the language or style does not appear to be up to the level of the rest of the book are still less worthy of consideration. For canons of taste are not stable and permanent. And even if the passage is defective from the literary point of view, it does not follow that it could not have come from the same author. An anthology of bad poetry has been compiled from the works of the masters of English poetry.

If the strophic arrangement explained in a later chapter correctly represents the intention of the original writer, we have an invaluable means of checking this craze for excising portions of the text for reasons which are largely subjective. For if we know the exact length of the strophe, we have merely to inquire whether the disputed passage is necessary to make the strophe of normal length. Having found that the passage is to be retained, we are compelled to seek some other means of explaining it than the too facile one of attributing it to a later scribe. If we judge the text in accordance with this standard, we must conclude that the number of interpolations is extremely small ; in fact, in only four instances (v. 9 ; xxxi. 11, 28 ; xxxix. 17) have the doubts concerning the genuineness of a verse been confirmed by the evidence derived from the metrical structure.

With regard to the longer disputed sections likewise,

a few preliminary remarks may be made. It must be noted that the book is evidently the result of mature thought, and that it may represent the labour and study of a lifetime. It is quite conceivable, therefore, that the original draft of the book was shorter than its present form, and that the argument was modified or supplemented in the course of time as new phases of the problem suggested themselves to the writer.

For example, a strong case could be made for the hypothesis that the original plan of the book consisted of Prologue, Dialogue and Epilogue. Such a book would have a certain unity and completeness; it would be a refutation of the current popular theory to explain the suffering of the just. It is conceivable that the author, on further consideration, felt that certain passages might lead to misunderstanding. Job's speeches might be regarded as irreverent, and so he added the Speeches of Jahweh to rebuke Job. Some passages in Job's speeches might be taken as a denial of the justice of God; and although such a thought has been explicitly rejected by the three friends, the author might have felt that the point needed to be further emphasised, and introduced a new character (Elihu) to give a thorough and logical defence of God's justice.

But all these are mere hypotheses. They account satisfactorily for certain peculiar features of the book; but that they are the true explanation is another matter. The important point is that it is possible to explain the peculiarities without having recourse to the hypothesis of diversity of authorship.

What has been said of the Speeches of Jahweh as a whole is true also of their various parts. It is possible that the poem on the Behemoth and Leviathan was written later than the rest of the section, and that the second part of the poem (xli. 3-25) was written later than the first, which seems to be complete in itself; and that the section on the ostrich, horse and vulture (xxxix. 13-30) is an appendix to the original poem on the habits of animals (xxxviii. 39-xxxix. 12). But all these hypotheses are quite consistent with unity of authorship.

Again, it is quite legitimate to hold that the writer made use of previously existing materials. Just as the writer of Samuel incorporated poems which were current in his day (e.g., 1 Sam. ii. 1-10; 2 Sam. i. 18-27; xxii. 2-51) so the writer of Job may have taken over a poem in praise of Wisdom (xxviii.) because its general theme is similar to that of the Speeches of Jahweh. If we assume that the poem is no part of the Dialogue, this hypothesis is just as likely as that which makes the poem the composition of a different author who lived at a much later date.

a) *The Prologue and Epilogue.*

The main reasons for the view that the Prologue and Epilogue are not from the hand of the same author as the Dialogue are: i) They are written in prose; ii) the vocabulary presents certain peculiarities; and iii) they suppose a somewhat different situation from that implied by the Dialogue.

The prose setting here fulfils the same function as the short prose passages which introduce the individual prophecies in Isaias and Jeremias. Gray<sup>1</sup> has drawn attention to an interesting parallel from Arabic literature, namely, the *Maqamat* of Hariri, in which the narrative is in prose and the speeches of the characters in poetry. The various differences in style and vocabulary have probably no other explanation than the mere fact that the Prologue and Epilogue are in prose, and the Dialogue in poetry. The Dialogue employs the poetical names for God ('El, 'Eloah, Shaddai, and rarely 'Elohim), the prose narrative employs the usual forms 'Elohim and Jahweh.

Some writers explain the differences between the style of the Prologue and Epilogue and that of the Dialogue by the hypothesis that the prose narrative is borrowed from a primitive folk-tale.<sup>2</sup> To this difference in origin they ascribe the difference in situation supposed by the Dialogue and the Epilogue (xlii. 7). Jahweh's approval of Job's

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *op. cit.* p. xxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kautzsch, *Das sogenannte Volksbuch von Hiob*. Tübingen. 1900. Buhl, *Zur Vorgeschichte des Buches Hiob*, in Marti's *Festschrift*, pp. 52-61.

words concerning Him seems to refer to Job's pious expression of resignation given in the Prologue (i. 21; ii. 20), rather than to his vehement challenge to God in the Dialogue; and similarly, Jahweh's reproof of the three friends would be more intelligible if, in the original folk-tale, they were represented as speaking like Job's wife (ii. 9). But this is to misunderstand the purpose of the Epilogue. The writer, in bringing the discussion to a conclusion, is referring only to the views expressed by Job and his three friends on the single issue which was the subject of the debate, viz., is suffering the consequence of sin? On this matter, the view expressed by Job was right, the other wrong. Hence the Epilogue is perfectly intelligible as the original conclusion of the debate in its present form.

But whether they were borrowed from a primitive folk-tale, or composed expressly to form the setting of the Dialogue, it may be taken as certain that the primitive book of Job contained at least Prologue, Dialogue and Epilogue. For without the Prologue, the whole discussion hangs in the air; the description of Job's innocence, of his calamities, and of the coming of his three friends, is absolutely necessary to explain the *raison d'être* of the debate. The Epilogue is likewise necessary, and for two reasons: in the first place, we look for some expression of the author's own views on the merits of the discussion, which the Prologue supplies; and in the second place, an account of Job's reinstatement is demanded by the Prologue. For, now that he has successfully stood the test, there remains no reason why his suffering should be prolonged.

#### b) *Speeches of Jahweh.*

The majority of modern critics<sup>1</sup> hold that the Speeches of Jahweh (at least in substance) belong to the same author as the Dialogue. And, indeed, no other conclusion is

<sup>1</sup> Van Hoonacker (*Cf. Rev. Biblique*, 1903, pp. 161ff.) is one of the few exceptions. He holds that the primitive book consisted of chapters i.-xxxii. to which additions were made by two different hands. The first added the Speeches of Elihu, the second the Speeches of Jahweh together with the Epilogue.

possible from the data presented by the book. For the Speeches of Jahweh are presupposed by the opening words of the Epilogue (xlii. 7), and are implied in Job's final confession: 'I had heard Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye hath seen Thee' (xlii. 5). They are likewise demanded by Job's final challenge in his closing speech: 'Behold my last word! Let the Almighty answer it!' It has been remarked above that they form the natural complement to the Dialogue.

But exception has been taken to the passage on the ostrich (xxxix. 13-18), and to the description of the Behemoth and the Leviathan (xl. 15-xli. 26). The former is wanting in the primitive Greek text; but modern investigation into the character of this Version tends to show that its evidence is to be received with great caution when it is question of the omission of a passage. The obscurity of the text owing to corruption was a sufficient reason for its omission by the Greek translator. The ostrich is worthy of a place with the horse and the vulture in a group of animals noted for their speed.

The objections to the section on the Behemoth and the Leviathan are: the comparative length of the description, the differences in presentation, the description of the physical features rather than the natural instincts of the animals, and the fact that the animals chosen are peculiar to Egypt rather than Palestine. But, as Dhorme remarks, 'We have no right to confine the writer to a rigid framework, and prevent him from departing from it when he changes his subject or desires to vary his style' (*op. cit.* p. lxxv). The differences are fully accounted for by the purpose of the speech of which this section forms part. To prove to Job that He has the power to overthrow sinners if He wills Jahweh asks him to consider the terrible monsters which He has created. Hence He refers not to the peculiar habits and instincts of the animals as in the First Speech, but to their strength and the terror which they inspire. The God who created such monsters is surely able to subdue the wicked. It has been pointed out above that we must take into account the possibility that all parts of the poem



were not written at the same time ; but there is absolutely no evidence for the view that parts of it are to be attributed to a different author.

c) *Speeches of Elihu.*

The only section which presents real difficulty, from the point of view of authenticity, is the Speeches of Elihu. The arguments which seem to point to diversity of authorship are of two kinds : i) the contents of the Speeches, and ii) various details of style and vocabulary.

i. The Speeches could be eliminated without any sense of loss or imperfection of the book as a whole. On the main problem, they add nothing to what has been said by the three friends, especially Eliphaz. Elihu is mentioned neither in the Prologue nor in the Epilogue ; neither Job nor his three friends nor Jahweh takes the slightest notice of his arguments. Although Jahweh expresses disapproval of what the friends have said, there is not the slightest reference to Elihu, whose opinions are substantially the same. Jahweh addresses Job as if he had just finished speaking, and completely disregards the speeches of Elihu.

ii. It is admitted that the style and language of Elihu's speeches have a good deal in common with the rest of the book. But together with these common features there are many peculiarities which are held to indicate a later date and a different author.

- a) The same thought is expressed in different terms in the Dialogue and by Elihu (see statistics in Dhorme, p. lxxxii and Gray, p. xlv).
- b) Elihu prefers the shorter form of the first personal pronoun ('*ani*') to the longer '*ânôki*'). The latter is used only twice (xxxiii. 9b and 31). In the development of the language the shorter form tends to supersede the longer, and Elihu's preference for the shorter form is an indication of a later date.
- c) Although the rest of the book contains a number of Aramaisms, the Aramaic colouring of Elihu's

speeches is more pronounced. (See statistics in Gray, pp. xlvi-xlvii.)

- d) 'The style is prolix, laboured and tautological; the power and brilliancy which are so conspicuous in the poem generally are sensibly wanting.' (Driver, *Introduction*, p. 429.)

On these grounds the majority of modern critics regard the Speeches of Elihu as a later addition to the book. But quite a considerable number of scholars, not only Catholic (Hontheim, Posselt, Peters, Prat) but Protestant (Budde, Cornill, Wildeboer) are of opinion that, notwithstanding these differences, the section formed part of the original book.

There are some points in the first argument which are capable of a plausible explanation. While it may be admitted that Jahweh's reply is the natural response to Job's challenge in his final speech, it does not necessarily follow that it originally came immediately after the latter. For in the speeches of the Dialogue there is not a very close connection between successive speeches. Job's speech in chapter ix. is a response to Eliphaz's speech (iv.-v.) rather than to Bildad's, which has immediately preceded. Besides, Jahweh's speeches do not deal directly with the problem under discussion; they are a rebuke to Job for his criticism of God's administration of the universe, and hence Job is addressed, and no reference is made either to the three friends or to Elihu.

To the argument that Elihu is not mentioned in the Prologue it is sufficient answer to say that the Prologue introduces the characters who take part in the Dialogue; a new phase of the discussion begins with the entrance of Elihu, and requires a new introduction. But it is not so easy to explain the absence of Elihu's name from the Epilogue, particularly if his views are substantially the same as those of the three friends. Unfortunately, owing to the obscurity of the text, critics are not agreed as to whether Elihu's view is the same as that of the three friends, or one of which the author himself approves, and therefore

not referred to in the Epilogue. Yet this is the critical point of the whole argument.

Some critics, Budde and Cornill in particular, claim that not only does Elihu make a positive contribution to the discussion, but his speeches contain the writer's own views on the problem. His chief contribution, according to these critics, is that suffering is an educative instrument in God's hands, leading man to the knowledge of himself, of the evil propensities within him. But it is difficult to interpret xxxv. 8ff and xxxvi. 16ff as a warning against the danger of offending God *in the future*, rather than as a warning to repent of sins already committed inadvertently. The parallelism in thought with v. 1ff and xxii. 1-10, 21-30 is very close, and it would seem that Elihu, like Eliphaz, attributes Job's sufferings to disregard of his obligations towards the poor and oppressed. He, too, regards suffering as the consequence of sin.

Peters' contention<sup>1</sup> that Eliphaz regarded Job as one of the wicked, whereas Elihu rebukes him for the violence of his language towards God, is likewise erroneous, and misrepresents both the teaching of Elihu and that of Eliphaz. For, as already explained, Eliphaz expressly admits Job's integrity (iv. 6), and the whole argument of the friends is based on that assumption. Elihu rebukes Job for his language, but so does Eliphaz (xv. 12-13), but he also accuses Job of sins of negligence of precisely the same character as those mentioned by Eliphaz (xxxv. 9-12 ; xxxvi. 16-17 ; cf. xxii. 6-11). From the detailed analysis of the speeches given in the course of the commentary it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Elihu presents substantially the same view as the three friends, and therefore the *more natural* explanation of the facts given above is that the whole section is an afterthought.<sup>2</sup> But to conclude that this addition was made by a different writer is to go far beyond the evidence.

With regard to the second series of arguments, Budde,

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Sellin, who holds that the section comes from the same author as the rest of the book, compares the differences in outlook exhibited by the two parts of Goethe's *Faust* (*Introd. to the Old Test.*, pp. 214-220).

who made an elaborate study of the language of Elihu<sup>1</sup> came to the conclusion that there is nothing in it which demands a later date than the rest of the book. Unfortunately, his arguments are considerably weakened by the fact that he is obliged to reject a large number of passages which prove inconvenient, viz. xxxii. 11-17; xxxiii. 4, 33; xxxiv. 9, 10a, 25-28, 29c; xxxv. 4, 13-14, 17, 25-26, 29-30; xxxvii. 15-16. On the other hand, some of the partisans of the other view are not free from the vice of exaggeration. It is doubtful if any significance is to be attached to Elihu's preference for the shorter form of the pronoun. For the evidence of the Ras Shamra documents seems to indicate that, at the very earliest period, both forms were used indifferently, without any difference in meaning.<sup>2</sup> Dhorme, who regards the section as the work of a different author, has shown that Elihu's use of the divine names is substantially the same as the discourses in the Dialogue, and his preference for 'El is shared by Bildad. The prolixity of style also may be discounted, because Elihu is represented as a fiery, impetuous youth, and his language is therefore different from that of the aged friends of Job. Indeed, the desire to differentiate the speech of youth and age may account for many of the other peculiarities as well. The book was written when Aramaic had already begun to supplant Hebrew as the popular language. The more classical form of the Dialogue may be due to a studied attempt at archaism to suit the character of the speakers. In other words, the differences in language and style may be due, not to the fact that the Speeches of Elihu are later in origin, but to the fact that the other speakers are made to use the language of an earlier date.

To sum up, the balance of probability seems to be in favour of the view that the original draft of the book did not contain the Speeches of Elihu; but there is nothing in the Speeches which is not quite consistent with the hypothesis that the work was revised and emended by the author himself.

<sup>1</sup> *Beiträge zur Kritik des Buches Hiob*, Bonn. 1876.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. Bea, in *Biblica*, 1938, p. 444.

## IV. THE TEXT OF JOB.

a) *The Massoretic Text.*

There are many reasons why we should expect a greater proportion of scribal errors in the Book of Job than in any other book of the Old Testament. The greater part of the book is written in poetry of the highest order, the language contains an unusually large proportion of *hapax legomena*, the argument is sometimes very subtle and obscure, and the same opinions are repeated again and again in different terms. All these circumstances tended to make the meaning obscure, and this obscurity led to errors of transcription, particularly when the language was no longer fully understood by the scribes.

Nevertheless, the fidelity with which the text has been handed down to us is really remarkable, as the fewness of the emendations required testifies. It may be said with truth that the text has suffered much more at the hands of some modern critics than it had suffered throughout the ages of its history by the usual accidents of reproduction by scribes. The obscurity of many passages provides ample scope for emendation and conjecture; but the fantastic corrections and reconstructions indulged in by some critics, Torczyner<sup>1</sup> and Richter, for instance, give a completely wrong impression of the state of the text.

It is unnecessary to catalogue here the various forms of scribal errors which are to be found in the book. (*Cf.* Dhorme, *op. cit.* pp. cliv-clvi.) They are of the same general character as those to be found in the other books; namely, incorrect grouping of the consonants, the wrong pointing of the letters, transposition of words or letters, or even whole phrases, the confusion of one letter with another, and the omission or addition of a word or a letter. A particularly common form of the last class of error is the writing once only of a letter that should be repeated

<sup>1</sup> According to Torczyner, the book is a collection of fragments whose present arrangement is due to a compiler, and his criticism largely consists in rearranging them in what he considers a more logical order.

(haplography) and the repetition of a letter which should have been written only once (dittography). Examples of these various forms of error may be seen in the critical notes appended to each section of the translation.

There is one form of error which deserves special consideration, because it has an important bearing on the strophic arrangement; namely, the accidental displacement of phrases or verses. This is a phenomenon which is now generally recognised even by the most conservative critics, especially in the poetical books.<sup>1</sup> The explanation is obvious. The text was probably written down stichometrically (each member of a verse forming a line, with several columns to the page), and the scribe occasionally omitted one or more lines, which were subsequently inserted either at the foot of the column or between the columns. In subsequent transcriptions the passage was inserted in the wrong place. Several instances of this form of error are to be found in the book of Job.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, we must carefully weigh the evidence before making such a drastic change in the text, and not be guided by a priori considerations, as, for example, the application of a metrical theory. Two things are essential: in the first place, we must show that the passage is out of harmony with its present context and that this lack of harmony is not due to textual corruption, and in the second place, we must show that the passages fill a lacuna elsewhere and that in its new position it satisfies all the requirements of sense, grammatical structure and metre. In most cases, the passage in question is so completely out of harmony with the context that critics generally suspected corruption, and at one time the tendency was to regard all such passages as later additions to the text. But if there is no reason why it should have been interpolated, and if it is required a few verses before or after, it is more natural to assume that the passage has been misplaced.

Sometimes the line or verse is only slightly misplaced, as

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Condamin's *Le livre d'Isaïe* (Paris, 1905) and *Le livre de Jérémie* (3e ed. Paris, 1936); Van Hoonacker's *Les douze petits Prophètes* (Paris, 1908).

<sup>2</sup> These passages are enclosed in square brackets [ ] in the translation.

in the case of vi. 21 which should follow verse 23, or viii. 18 which should follow verse 15. But occasionally, as in the case of xii. 22, xvii. 8, and xxxiii. 3-4, the passage has strayed into a different speech, probably because it became attached to the wrong column of the text.

There are occasions, however, where the passage was omitted by the scribe and the mistake entirely overlooked. In the case of two passages (x. 22 and xix. 4) the Greek enables us to restore a text which is entirely wanting in the Hebrew. In a few other cases, either the context or the strophic arrangement leads us to suspect the omission of a clause of which no trace is to be found either in the Hebrew or the Versions (ix. 35 ; x. 3 ; xx. 23 ; xxii. 2 ; xxvii. 21 ; xxviii. 28 ; xxxviii. 41).

In addition to these minor changes, the majority of modern critics agree that there is a still more serious disturbance of the text in the Third Cycle of speeches of the Dialogue, as a result of which Sophar's third speech is entirely wanting in the present text, and Bildad's reduced to a few verses. This problem will be fully discussed in connection with chapters xxv.-xxxi.

#### b) *The Greek (Septuagint) Version.*

Of the Versions, the only ones which call for special attention are the Greek (Septuagint) and the Latin Vulgate.

The primitive form of the Septuagint Version was considerably shorter than the Hebrew, as we know from the testimony of Origen (*ad Africanum*, 4) and of Jerome (*Praef. in Job*). Origen supplied the missing passages in his Hexaplar from the version of Theodotion, marking the added passages, in accordance with his usual method, by asterisks, and our printed editions are, therefore, a blend of the original Septuagint and the Version of Theodotion.

Unfortunately, the diacritical points were omitted by the copyists, and it is only by their survival in a few manuscripts that we know the extent of the additions. These manuscripts are: two MSS. of the Greek, namely, *Colbertinus* and *Holmes-Parsons 248* ; two MSS. of Jerome's

Latin version of the Greek, Bodleian 2426 and *Turonensis* 8. In addition, the Syriac-Hexaplar has preserved the diacritic points of Origen's Hexaplar, and the Sahidic version omits the passages due to Theodotion. All the evidence presented by these documents is now to be had in convenient form in Rahlfs' *Septuaginta*.

In Rahlfs' edition, 379 stichoi are marked with an asterisk, or about one-sixth of the whole. But there are good grounds for thinking that the proportion was much greater, and that of the total of 2,200 stichoi the Septuagint omitted about 600,<sup>1</sup> or more than one-fourth. From the statistics compiled by Gray (p. lxxv) it is clear that the asterisked stichoi are not evenly distributed throughout the book, but increase in number as the book proceeds, until they reach the proportion of 35 per cent. in the Speeches of Elihu.<sup>2</sup>

It is now generally agreed that the difference in length between the Greek and the Hebrew is due to the omission by the Greek translator of passages which already existed in the Hebrew, rather than to the subsequent expansion of the Hebrew text by the addition of matter which was not in the original. The additional passages have the same characteristics of style and vocabulary as the rest of the book, and their omission by the Greek has in many instances destroyed the poetical structure by depriving a line of its parallel. As to the reason why the translator omitted these passages, it may in many cases have been accidental; but the unequal distribution of the passages points to deliberate shortening of the text. Sometimes the obscurity of a passage furnishes a sufficient explanation of its omission; at other times, the translator probably felt that the same statement had been made already in the course of the debate.

According to Swete,<sup>3</sup> the Septuagint Version was made

<sup>1</sup> Jerome makes the difference 700-800 verses, i.e., stichoi (*Praef. in Job*).

<sup>2</sup> Gray has calculated that up to chapter xv. the proportion is approximately 4 per cent.; in xv.-xxi. 16 per cent.; in xxii.-xxxi. 25 per cent.; in xxxii.-xxxvii. 35 per cent. and in xxxviii.-xlii. 16 per cent. (*op. cit.* p. lxxv).

<sup>3</sup> *Introd. to the O. T. in Greek*, p. 256.



by an Alexandrian Jew for the general reader rather than for the Synagogue. In general, the translation is free, not literal, and often degenerates into a loose paraphrase, so that it is no longer possible to recover the exact reading of the original. Sometimes, the meaning is completely distorted, showing that either the translator did not understand the meaning of the Hebrew, or that the text which he translated was already corrupt. An additional source of confusion is that Origen sometimes overlooked the fact that a passage was already summarised in the Septuagint, and his addition of the extract from Theodotion resulted in a double translation. The translator had a predilection for certain words and phrases, and employed them to translate different words in the original, and he is sometimes influenced by the reading of a parallel passage in which the wording of the Hebrew is entirely different.<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious from what has been said that great caution is to be observed in the use of the Greek text for the purposes of textual criticism. The general character of the Version shows that it is unscientific to reject a passage as a gloss for the sole reason that it is wanting in the Septuagint. Nevertheless, wherever we can recover, with reasonable certainty, the original Hebrew on which it is based, it gives invaluable help. As will be seen from the critical notes, it very often represents a better text than the Hebrew; and in some of the most corrupt passages (e.g. xxiv. 18ff), even though it does not exactly reproduce the original, it gives valuable clues which enable us to work back to the text from which both our present Hebrew and the Greek are derived. As has been pointed out already, in two passages (x. 22 and xix. 4) it preserves fragments which have entirely disappeared from the Hebrew, but which the strophic arrangement proves to have formed part of the original text.

#### c) *The Latin Vulgate.*

We have already mentioned the two MSS. which have

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ziegler, *Der textkritische Wert der Septuaginta des Buches Job*, in *Miscellanea Biblica*, vol. II., Roma, 1934, pp. 277-296.

preserved for us Jerome's translation of the text of Origen's Hexaplar, incorporating the passages omitted by the primitive Septuagint. This work was completed between the years 389 and 392. By this version he claimed to have raised up Job from the dunghill where he lay 'covered with the worms of errors,' and made him once more 'entire and unsullied.'

But he soon determined to go one step further, and translate the whole book direct from the Hebrew. He fully appreciated the difficulty of the task, and compares the Hebrew to 'an eel or a muraena which a man tries to hold in his clenched hands, but the more he squeezes it, the faster it slips away.' As on other occasions, he secured the assistance of a noted rabbi of Lydda, 'at no little expense' (*Praef. in Job*). He claimed to have followed none of the Greek versions, but to have translated directly from the Hebrew, 'now the words, now the sense, now both together.'

There can be no doubt that he spared no pains to make the translation as accurate as possible; and, in fact, he produced a version of Job which in the rhythm and beauty of its language stands supreme among all the ancient versions. That the translation is sometimes slavishly literal is to be seen in his attempt to reproduce even the Hebrew particles, as for example the enclitic *na* by *obsecro te*. But, as a general rule, he aimed at reproducing the sense, and sometimes with a freedom approaching that of the Targum. A fair example of his method is to be found in his translation of the first strophe of chapter vi. :

Utinam appenderentur *peccata mea quibus iram merui,*  
*et calamitas quam patior in statera ;*  
 Quasi arena maris haec gravior appareret,  
*unde et verba mea dolore sunt plena ;*  
 Quia sagittae Domini in me sunt,  
*quarum indignatio ebibit spiritum meum,*  
*et terrores Domini militant contra me ;*  
 Numquid rugiet onager *cum habuerit herbam ?*  
*aut mugiet bos cum ante praesepe plenum steterit ?*

aut poterit comedi insulsum quod non sit sale conditum ?  
aut potest aliquis gustare, quod gustatum affert mortem ?  
Quae prius nolebat tangere anima mea  
nunc prae angustia cibi mei sunt.

In this passage, the italicised words in each clause represent a single word in the original, which shows that Jerome, while giving the correct meaning, treats the text with considerable freedom. The very obscure and difficult clauses at the end of the strophe become perfectly smooth and elegant in Jerome's translation. This is true in the case of the most corrupt and obscure passages, which become perfectly intelligible in the Vulgate, though modern critics may not agree that the meaning is that intended by the original writer. Note, for example, how Jerome changes the whole import of xix. 25 by his translation *in novissimo die de terra surrecturus sum*. In the Hebrew there is nothing to correspond to 'die,' 'de terra' is represented by 'on the dust,' and the verb is in the *third* person, not the *first*.<sup>1</sup>

For reasons of style, Jerome often abandons the simple construction of the Hebrew sentence for a construction more in harmony with the Latin idiom. Thus he uses subordinating conjunctions and participles where the Hebrew has 'and,' he uses the accusative and infinitive where the Hebrew has a finite verb. He sometimes translates the same Hebrew word in different ways for the sake of variety.<sup>2</sup>

Although he claims to have followed none of the Greek versions, it was inevitable that he should have been influenced by the Greek version which he had so recently translated into Latin; and many instances have been noted of the close resemblance of the Vulgate to one or other of the Greek translations, even where they differ

<sup>1</sup> Cf. F. Stummer, *Einige Beobachtungen über die Arbeitsweise Hieronymus*, in *Biblica*, 1929, pp. 3-30.

<sup>2</sup> Jerome was evidently conscious that he sometimes followed the Hebrew idiom too literally; for he excuses himself on the ground that 'the harshness of the Hebrew idiom had marred the elegance and grace of the Latin speech' and that in acquiring Hebrew he had lost something of his own language (*in Gal. lib. III. Prolog.*).

from the Hebrew (for examples see Dhorme, *op. cit.* p. clxxi). The influence of his Hebrew tutor may be seen in the adoption of certain interpretations which were part of the traditional Jewish exegesis, as when he renders 'not one' by '*nonne Tu qui solus es*' (xiv. 4). To the same cause is due the frequent agreement between the Vulgate and the Targum.

From all this it follows that great reserve is required in the use of the Vulgate for the reconstruction of the text, and it is rarely to be followed unless supported by other evidence. As a guide to the correct interpretation it is of inestimable value.

## V. DATE OF THE BOOK.

We may disregard the views of the older commentators who assigned the book to the period of Solomon or Moses or even the end of the monarchy. Modern critics are agreed that the book belongs to the post-Exilic period, though they may differ as to the precise date within that period. This conclusion is the result of several converging lines of argument.

i. *The language.* The most decisive argument for the post-Exilic date is that based on the language of the book. At first sight the book presents a curious blend of features which belong to the best classical period of Hebrew, and others which point to a late date. But the discovery of the text of Ecclesiasticus has furnished proof that classical Hebrew could have been written as late as the second century B.C., whereas the writer's familiarity with Aramaic excludes a pre-Exilic date. The writer uses a large number of Aramaic words, sometimes in conjunction with the corresponding Hebrew; he makes use of Aramaic grammatical forms and constructions. Aramaic had therefore penetrated into the ordinary speech of the people, and the writer must have lived during the period of transition, when it was gradually supplanting Hebrew as the spoken language.

ii. *The theme of the book.* In general, the Wisdom

literature is the product of the post-Exilic period. The age of the Prophets was succeeded by that of the 'Wise,' who collected and taught to their disciples the traditional wisdom of the ages, and united it with the doctrines of revelation to form a complete rule of life. The three friends of Job are represented as belonging to this class, and the book itself shows an intimate acquaintance with the speculations of the circles of the 'Wise.' The character of the discussion of the problem of evil points to a period when the teaching of Ezechiel on individual responsibility had superseded the older conception of collective responsibility (see Chapter 2). The problem was already one of long standing, and the solution which is combated by the writer had already become traditional. As the problem is suggested for the first time by Jeremias (xii. 1-3), it follows that we have to descend well into the post-Exilic period to find the date of Job. Some details in the discussion enable us to fix the date more precisely: 'the Satan' of Job points to an earlier period than 'Satan' (without article) of 1 Chron. xxi. 1 (about 300 B.C.), but about contemporary with 'the Satan' of Zach. iii. 1ff (about 520).

iii. *Allusion to the Exile.* Job's reference to the degradation of counsellors, judges, kings, priests, etc., in xii. 17-19, is best explained as an allusion to the deportation of the inhabitants of Jerusalem at the Exile (*cf.* Is. iii. 1ff; 2 K. xxiv.-xxv.).

Although the book contains an enormous number of parallels to passages in other books of the Old Testament, many of which indicate dependence on one side or the other, these parallels are of little value for determining the date. For we can never be certain on which side the dependence lies; all that is clear is that either the writer of Job showed an intimate knowledge of the rest of Hebrew literature, or that he exerted a deep influence on subsequent writers. We must be content with fixing the date between the comparatively wide limits of the Restoration (538) and the formation of the Septuagint, probably much nearer to the former than to the latter. The difference

between the conclusions arrived at by the most recent critics is in itself sufficient indication that the evidence does not enable us to fix the precise date. Gray assigns it to the fifth century; Dhorme between 500 and 450; Peters about 300; Hölscher between 400 and 200 B.C.

Of the writer himself nothing is known beyond what can be deduced from his work. Although the scene of the drama is in Edom, there is no doubt that the writer was a Jew. The time (patriarchal age) and the place (Edom) are part of the imaginative setting, the thoughts expressed are those of a Palestinian Jew of the post-Exilic period. He was one of the 'Wise' like Ben Sira, and like him steeped in the literature and traditions of the past. In another respect also he corresponded with Ben Sira's description of the 'wise'—'he had passed into strange countries and tried good and evil among men' (Ecclus. xxxix. 5). He had seen the caravans of Tema and Sheba wending their way through the wilderness (vi. 19), he had watched the light papyrus-boats negotiating the rapids of the Nile (ix. 26), and the two monsters, the crocodile and hippopotamus, basking in its waters (xl. 15-xli.). He was acquainted with other animals also, like the wild ass, the wild ox, the ostrich, which inhabited regions remote from human habitation (xxxix. 1ff). That he had come into contact with the philosophy of the Greeks, as some (e.g. Peters) maintain, while not impossible, is not borne out by anything in the book, which is written from the standpoint of the native Jewish wisdom.

## VI. METRICAL STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK.

It is not my purpose to give here a detailed exposition of the principles of Hebrew poetry, but merely to explain the principles on which the text of the different poems is divided into verses and strophes in the present work. Many points of Hebrew metrics are still in dispute, and no good purpose would be served by the application to the text of principles not generally accepted; but the researches of scholars during the past half-century have

resulted in a large measure of agreement on the essential points, and the doubts which remain are concerned with details of comparatively minor importance.

The points on which there is substantial agreement are :

- i. The unit of Hebrew poetry is the verse, not the stichos or line.
- ii. The verse is divided into two or three equal or unequal parts by caesuras ; in other words, the verse is composed of two or three stichoi or lines.
- iii. There is a certain balance of thought between the stichoi of which the verse is composed.

Since the time when Lowth in his *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum* (1753) laid the foundations of the study of Hebrew poetry, it has been customary to speak of this last feature as *Parallelism*, which is distinguished into three classes : Synonymous, Antithetic and Synthetic. But the last is not, strictly speaking, parallelism at all, since the second member of the verse merely serves to complete the thought of the first. Hence modern scholars prefer to speak of *balance of thought* rather than parallelism as the essential feature. This balance of thought affects the expression, and sometimes results in parallelism.

But whether we call it 'balance of thought' or 'parallelism,' it is obvious that it cannot exist unless the verse consists of at least two members. A stichos or line cannot stand alone. The simplest verse must have at least two parts, which are inseparable. It follows that the metrical unit must always correspond to the sense unit. The end of the verse means also a break in the thought.

*Metrical Forms.* The metrical system of Job is not uniform. The greater part is composed of verses of two equal parts, each consisting of three significant words (or accents). But a long poem written throughout in this metre tends to become monotonous, and the poet secures variety by altering the length of the stichoi, and by the occasional use of triplets (verses of three stichoi) instead of couplets. The following are the different verse-forms to be found in the book :

a) 2 : 2. As the caesura is essential for the balance of thought or parallelism, and the simplest clause consists of at least two significant words (subject and predicate), it follows that the simplest form of verse is one which contains four words, divided into two equal parts. As each significant word has an accent, this metre is usually referred to as a verse of four accents or beats, or a tetrameter. This form of verse is comparatively rare ; but there are some examples in Job, at least if we follow the Massoretic pointing ; for example :

That Thou shouldst vi'sit him every mo'ning,  
Te'st him at every mo'ment. (vii. 18.)

Why doth thy hea'rt car'ry thee away ?  
And why do thine ey'es ro'll ? (xv. 12.)

I will sho'w thee, hea'rken to me,  
And that which I have se'en I will rel'ate. (xv. 17.)

In the first example, there are only four words in the Hebrew ; in the other examples, there are six words to each verse, but in each line or stichos, one word, according to the Massoretic pointing, is unaccented.

b) 2 : 3. The form 2 : 3 or five beats or accents with caesura after the second, is also comparatively rare. But the occurrence of the form elsewhere warns us that it is hazardous to assume that the instances which occur in Job are due to the corruption of the text. We have an example in xxvi. 5 :

The Re'phaim tre'mble,  
Bene'ath the wate'rs and the inhabi'tants thereof,

which critics expand to the normal 3 : 3 metre by emendation, thereby distorting the sense of the passage. But the same form occurs in ix. 29, where there is no reason to suspect corruption :

It is I' that should be found in the wro'ng,  
Wh'y should I lab'our in va'in ?

c) 3 : 2. This is one of the best-known forms of Hebrew



metre. It has received the special name of *Qinah rhythm* because of its use in Lamentations ; but its use is not confined to dirges, and it is of frequent occurrence in poems of a different character (e.g. Ps. xxiii.), as well as a variation in poems whose normal metre is 3 : 3. In Job we have many examples :

It is lo'nger than the ea'rth in me'asure,  
And wi'der than the se'a. (xi. 9.)

How lon'g will ye ve'x my so'ul ?  
and cru'sh me with wo'rds ? (xix. 1.)

They se'nd forth their yo'ung ones like a flo'ck,  
And their chi'ldren da'nce. (xxi. 11.)

d) 3 : 3. The form 3 : 3 may be considered the characteristic metre of the book, and is the commonest metre in Hebrew poetry generally. Examples :

Bene'ath his ro'ots shall dr'y up,  
And abo've his fo'liage shall wi'ther. (xviii. 16.)

And no'w I am beco'me their so'ng,  
And I a'm a bywo'rd to the'm. (xxx. 6.)

The fact is so evident as to need no further emphasis, and many critics go so far as to claim that any other form that is found is the result of textual corruption. But there is a growing tendency to recognise the fact that the Hebrew poet allowed himself considerable freedom, and varied the monotony by verses of a different rhythm.

e) 4 : 3, 3 : 4, and 4 : 4. Scholars are somewhat reluctant to admit the existence of a verse of longer form than 3 : 3. But there is no intrinsic reason why we should exclude lines of four accents. These forms are to be found elsewhere, and the number of instances in Job is so great that the supposition of corruption in every case is most improbable. For example :

4 : 4. Per'ish the da'y on whi'ch I was bo'rn,  
And the ni'ght which sa'id : a ma'n is conce'ived !  
(iii. 3.)

4 : 3. Sma'll and gre'at, the're are the sa'me,  
 And the se'rvant is fre'e from his ma'ster. (iii. 19.)

The form 3 : 4 like 2 : 3 is comparatively rare, and sometimes it is possible to divide the second member into two, thus forming a triplet (3 : 2 : 2). But there are some instances in which the form 3 : 4 appears definitely established :

Surely, thi's was the dwe'lling of a wic'ked man,  
 And thi's the pla'ce of one who kne'w not Go'd. (xviii. 21.)

Will it be we'll when He shall put yo'u to the te'st ?  
 As one dece'iveth me'n will ye dece'ive Hi'm ? (xiii. 9.)

I have enumerated the different forms of verse which are to be found in Job in common with the rest of Hebrew poetry to show how unscientific it is to try to fit the verses into a single rigid system. Sometimes it is not difficult to expand a line of two accents into one of three, or to reduce a line of four accents to one of three ; all that is required is to accent a word which is usually unaccented, or to join two words under a single accent. But sometimes more drastic changes are required, namely the addition or omission of a word. It is much safer, when there are no other grounds for suspecting corruption, to adhere to the accentuation of the Massoretes, and to assume that the Hebrew poet felt free to vary the metre as the apt expression of this thought required.

*Triplets.* Sometimes the unit of thought cannot be expressed in the normal verse of two stichoi, and the poet adds a third member to form a ' triplet ' or verse of three stichoi. Some critics have an unreasonable prejudice against this form of verse. Duhm and Hölscher, for instance, arrange all the poems in verses of two members, and any line which refuses to fit into the system has to be discarded. Dhorme also (p. cxlviii, note 2) refuses to admit the existence of triplets. He prefers to call the combination ' a verse followed by a half-verse.' But this is largely a question of terminology. If the three clauses form a single unit of thought, it is more logical to call the

group a single verse. Such triplets are to be found in all classes of poetry. Psalm xlv., for example, is composed almost entirely of triplets, and the form is particularly frequent in the Prophets. Of the seven verses in the first two strophes of Job four are triplets, and they are to be found at irregular intervals throughout the book, but particularly at the end of a strophe.

The length of the lines of a triplet presents all the variations which are to be found in the couplet, i.e., each stichos may consist of two, three, or four significant words or accents. The simplest form 2 : 2 : 2 is found only twice :

My spi'rit is destro'yed,  
My da'ys spe'nt,  
The gra've my lo't. (xvii. 1.)

My da'ys have pa'ssed,  
My pla'ns are plu'cked out,  
The de'sires of my he'art. (xvii. 11.)

Many critics endeavour to reduce these verses to the normal form 3 : 3, but none of the emendations suggested is an improvement on the present text.

As a general rule, the arrangement of the Massoretic text may be trusted. The third line is so closely connected with the other two in sense that together they form a single thought-unit. But there are some instances where two successive triplets have been written and accented as couplets, and *vice versa*. For example, xxix. 15-17 is arranged in the Massoretic text as follows :

15 I was eyes to the blind,  
And I was feet to the lame ;  
16 And I was a father to the poor,  
And the cause of one I knew not I examined ;  
17 And I broke the jaws of the wicked,  
And from his teeth I plucked the prey.

Two thoughts are expressed here : Job's kindness to the needy, and his protection of the rights of the weak against the strong. In structure and in meaning 16a is connected

with 15, while 16b introduces the new thought which is developed in 17, Job's intervention in the law-courts to protect the weak against the strong. The verses should be written as two triplets.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes the converse is the case, and the triplets of the Massoretic text are the result of corruption of a passage which was originally in couplets. Thus, x. 15, 17, and 22 in the present text are triplets; but in each case the looseness of the connection between the third clause and the other two points to corruption. In the case of 22 the Greek supplies the missing line; in the case of the other two, the couplet is obtained by combining 15c and 17c. Similarly, the text of xxiv. 12-16 is written throughout in triplets; but it is generally admitted that, at least in some cases, this is the result of corruption, and the verses were originally couplets.<sup>2</sup>

At other times, the want of connection between the third stichos and the other two may lead to the suspicion that the original text had two couplets, one line of which has been lost. We have examples of this in x. 3; xxviii. 28; xxxviii. 41. The criterion must always be: the verse (whether two or three stichoi) must form a single unit of thought.

*Strophes.* We now come to one of the most disputed questions in the domain of Hebrew poetry. Are the units of poetry (verses) grouped into larger sections of *regular length*? It is obvious that, as there are paragraphs in prose, there must be sense-divisions in poetry likewise; and some scholars call all such groups of verses—no matter how irregular in length—strophes. Thus, Peters divides Job's introductory speech into eleven 'strophes,' namely, three of three verses each, seven of two verses each, and one of a single verse; but there is no regularity in the occurrence of the two-verse and three-verse groups. Some modern critics deny that there is any regularity in the length of the sense-divisions in the poems of Job, and therefore

<sup>1</sup> Other examples of the same kind are v. 20-22; xi. 5-6; xii. 25 (?); xxix. 21-23; xxx. 3b-4; xxxix. 20-21.

<sup>2</sup> Other examples: xix. 28-29; xx. 23 (?); xxiv. 22; xxxi. 27 (?); xxxvi. 11, 16.

deny the existence of strophes in the strict sense. Thus Dhorme confesses (*op. cit.* p. cl) that he had to give up his original intention of dividing the poems into verses and regular strophes; and Budde regards the division into strophes as 'unproven' and 'improbable' (p. viii).

On the other hand, another group of scholars regards regular strophic arrangement as quite as essential as the division into verses, and it is the unnatural and arbitrary character of the systems in vogue that has produced the scepticism of men like Dhorme and Budde.

- a) Bickell, who is followed by Duhm, Beer and Hölscher, favours a system of four-line or two-verse strophes; but the theory involves so much emendation, omission and transposition in order to fit the poems into this rigid scheme that it has found little favour.
- b) The other system in vogue is much more complicated. A poem, or section of a poem, is composed of Strophe, Antistrophe, and Intermediate or Alternating Strophe. The Strophe and Antistrophe are of equal length, and symmetrically arranged; thus, if the Strophe has seven stichoi arranged in the order 3:2:2, the Antistrophe is in the form 3:2:2 or 2:2:3. The Alternating Strophe may differ in length and arrangement from the other two; but within itself the stichoi are likewise symmetrically arranged; for example: 3:2:3, or 3:3:3, or 3:2:3:2, but never 3:3:2 or 2:2:3. In addition to symmetry of form, there may be also symmetry of expression; certain significant words being repeated in the corresponding stichoi in Strophe and Antistrophe. This system has been applied to the Psalms by Zenner,<sup>1</sup> to Isaias and Jeremias by Condamin,<sup>2</sup> and to Job by Hontheim.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Die Chorgesänge im Buche der Psalmen*. Freiburg i. B. 1896.

<sup>2</sup> *Le livre d'Isaïe*, Paris, 1904. *Le livre de Jérémie*, Paris, 1936.

<sup>3</sup> *Das Buch Hiob als metrisches Kunstwerk nachgewiesen*, Freiburg i. B., 1904.

The strophic system adopted in the present work is much simpler and more natural. It is based on no abstruse and recondite principles; it is merely the application of the fundamental law that the verse is the unit of thought, and the strophe, like the paragraph in prose, consists of a group of verses which develop the same thought. If we divide the poems of the book of Job in accordance with this principle we get the following results:

1. A Strophe may consist of three, four, five, six or seven verses.
2. Each poem (or speech) has a regular strophic arrangement which may be different from that of the preceding or the following.
3. The strophic arrangement of a poem follows either of two patterns: either a) the strophes are all of the same length, or b) the strophes are 'odd and even,' that is, the alternate strophes are one verse longer or shorter.

There is little in these results which should occasion surprise. If there are long and short paragraphs in prose, there is no reason why we should, like Bickell and Duhm, restrict the poet to strophes of two verses. It is a question of fact which every reader can test for himself: does the break in the sense occur after two, or three, or more verses? Similarly, it is not unnatural to find a special strophic arrangement for each poem; for each speech forms an independent unit.

The division into strophes of equal length is a very natural one, and was probably the general rule in the case of lyric poetry, and was necessary if the poem was intended to be sung to a definite tune. In the few cases where the strophic division is guaranteed by the recurrence of a refrain as in Is. ix.-x. 4, Ps. xlvi., lvi., lix., the strophes are all of equal length. The same is true of the Alphabetic poems like Lam. i.-iii., Ps. ix-x., cxix., where each group of verses begins with a different letter. Unfortunately, in many instances, the strophic system of the poem has been obscured by corruption.

The alternation of 'odd and even' strophes is the one result which is somewhat unexpected. I have found only one example elsewhere; namely, the poem in Isaias li. 1-8 which has strophes of four and three verses alternately. But of the existence of this metrical scheme in the book of Job there seems to be no doubt; it is sufficient to examine Job's speeches in chapters iii., vi.-vii. to be convinced of this. The 'odd and even' strophes occur in three forms: strophes of three and four, five and six, and six and seven verses, alternately.

*The strophic system of the book.*

a) *The Dialogue.* Job's introductory Speech consists of strophes of four and three verses, alternately. In the Dialogue proper, his reply to each of the three friends has its own special strophic system; his reply to Eliphaz consists of strophes of six and seven verses, alternately; his reply to Bildad, of strophes of six verses throughout, and his reply to Sophar of five and six verses, alternately. The Speeches both of Eliphaz and Sophar have strophes of five verses each, that of Bildad strophes of three verses.

Job (introductory speech) .	. 4 : 3 : 4
Eliphaz . . . . .	. 5 : 5 : 5
Job's reply to Eliphaz .	. 6 : 7 : 6
Bildad . . . . .	. 3 : 3 : 3
Job's reply to Bildad .	. 6 : 6 : 6
Sophar . . . . .	. 5 : 5 : 5
Job's reply to Sophar .	. 5 : 6 : 5
Poem on Wisdom (xxviii.)	. 5 : 5 : 5

b) *Speeches of Elihu.* If we are to trust the introductory formulae, the Elihu section consists of four Speeches which begin at xxxii. 6, xxxiv. 1, xxxv. 1 and xxxvi. 1, respectively. But both subject-matter and strophic arrangement indicate that the first speech has two distinct parts (xxxii. 6-12 and xxxiii) while the fourth has three (xxxvi. 1-21, xxxvi. 22-xxxvii. 13, and xxxvii. 14-24).

First Speech (section a)	.	.	3 : 3 : 3
„ „ (section b)	.	.	5 : 5 : 5
Second Speech	.	.	6 : 6 : 6
Third Speech	.	.	3 : 3 : 3
Fourth Speech (section a)	.	.	3 : 3 : 3
„ „ (section b)	.	.	4 : 4 : 4
„ „ (section c)	.	.	5 : 5

c) *Speeches of Jahweh*. The First Speech consists of four distinct parts which deal with different aspects of the same subject, and each has its distinctive strophic arrangement ; the Second Speech is a unit, and the strophic system is of the 'odd and even' variety. It is worthy of note that the brief dialogue between Jahweh and Job at the beginning (xl. 1ff) and Job's reply at the end (xlii. 1-6) form integral parts of the poem. This disposes of Budde's view (which has many adherents) that xl. 4-5 originally stood after Jahweh's Second Speech.

First Speech (section a)	.	.	4 : 4 : 4
„ „ (section b)	.	.	3 : 3 : 3
„ „ (section c)	.	.	4 : 4 : 4
„ „ (section d)	.	.	5 : 5 : 5
Second Speech	.	.	6 : 5 : 6

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## ABBREVIATIONS.

Ass.	Assyrian.
Ar.	Arabic.
Aram.	Aramaic.
Aq.	Aquila.
G or Gr	Greek.
Ges-K	Gesenius-Kautzsch.
LXX	Septuagint Version.
M T	Massoretic text.
Syr.	Syriac.
Sym.	Symmachus.
Theod.	Theodotion.
Vulg.	Vulgate.
Targ.	Targum.
Rev. Vers.	Revised Version.
Ox. Lex.	Oxford Lexicon.
ZATW	Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.
transp.	transpose.
ditt.	dittography.
haplog.	haplography.
l.	lege.
( )	denotes a word or phrase omitted on critical grounds.
[ ]	denotes a word or phrase inserted on critical grounds.

Words or clauses regarded as interpolated are printed in italics.

SECTION I  
THE PROLOGUE  
CHAPTERS I-II



## THE PROLOGUE.

*Summary.* The purpose of the Prologue is to set before the reader the problem of the suffering of the just in a single striking example. It represents a man 'perfect and upright, fearing God and avoiding evil,' whose sanctity is acknowledged even by God Himself. Yet this man, while still retaining his sanctity, is smitten with two series of appalling calamities.

To Job himself, conscious of his integrity, the blow brings a sense of bewilderment, as it seems irreconcilable with his conviction of the justice of God; to the outsider, represented by the three friends, it is but a proof that Job, for all his sanctity, is not wholly free from sin. The reader is let into the secret which is hidden both from Job and from his friends; he knows that Job's sufferings are permitted by God to prove his fidelity, and is thus prepared in advance for the rejection of the view maintained by the three friends.

The section may be divided as follows :—

- a) Introductory. Job's character, his family and his possessions; his scrupulous regard for the law of God (i. 1-5).
  - b) The first scene at the heavenly court (i. 6-12).
  - c) The first series of calamities (ii. 13-22).
  - d) Second scene at the heavenly court (ii. 1-6).
  - e) The second calamity (ii. 7-10).
  - f) The coming of the Three Friends (ii. 11-13).
- a) i. 1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and avoided evil. 2 And there were born to him seven sons and three daughters; 3 and his possessions were seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a very great household. And that man was the greatest of all the children of the east.
- 4 Now his sons were wont to go and hold a feast in the house of each in turn, and to send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 5 And when the days of their feasting had run their round, Job used to sanctify them; and he arose early and offered holocausts according to the number of them all. For Job said: 'It may be that my

children have sinned, and blasphemed God in their hearts.' So did Job always.

- b) 6 Now the day came when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jahweh, and the Satan also came in the midst of them. 7 And Jahweh said unto the Satan: 'Whence comest thou?' And the Satan answered Jahweh and said: 'From roaming the earth, and walking to and fro therein.' 8 And Jahweh said unto the Satan: 'Hast thou noticed My servant Job? There is none like him on the earth, a man perfect and upright, one that feareth God and avoideth evil.' 9 And the Satan answered Jahweh and said: 'Is it without reason that Job feareth God? 10 Hast Thou not made a hedge about him and his house, and about all that is his on every side? The work of his hands Thou hast blessed, and his possessions have increased in the land; 11 but put forth Thy hand, and touch all that he hath, surely, he will blaspheme Thee to Thy face.' 12 And Jahweh said unto the Satan: 'Behold, all that he hath is in thy power, only against himself put not forth thy hand.' And the Satan went forth from the presence of Jahweh.

- c) 13 And the day came when his sons and his daughters were drinking wine in the house of their eldest brother, 14 and a messenger came unto Job, and said: 'The oxen were ploughing, and the she-asses grazing near them, 15 and the Sabeans made a raid and took them, and the servants they smote with the edge of the sword, and I only have escaped, alone to tell thee.'

16 While he was still speaking, another came and said: 'A fire of God fell from heaven, and burned the flock and the servants and devoured them, and I only have escaped, alone to tell thee.'

17 And while he was still speaking, another came and said: 'Chaldeans made themselves into three bands, and fell upon the camels and took them, and



the servants they smote with the edge of the sword, and I only have escaped, alone to tell thee.'

18 And while he was still speaking, another came and said: 'Thy sons and daughters were eating and drinking in the house of their eldest brother, 19 and behold, a great wind came from beyond the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people and they died, and I only have escaped, alone to tell thee.'

20 And Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell to the ground and bowed himself, and said: 21 'Naked I came forth from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; Jahweh gave, and Jahweh hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jahweh!' 22 In all this Job sinned not, neither uttered he folly against Jahweh.

- d) ii. 1 And the day came when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jahweh, and the Satan also came in the midst of them (*to present himself before Jahweh*). 2 And Jahweh said unto the Satan: 'Whence comest thou?' And the Satan answered Jahweh and said: 'From roaming the earth, and walking to and fro therein.' 3 And Jahweh said unto the Satan: 'Hast thou noticed my servant Job? There is none like him on the earth, a man perfect and upright, one that feareth God and avoideth evil; and he still holdeth fast to his integrity, and in vain hast thou moved Me against him to destroy him.' 4 And the Satan answered Jahweh and said: 'Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life; 5 but put forth Thy hand, and touch his bone and his flesh, surely, he will blaspheme Thee to Thy face.' 6 And Jahweh said unto the Satan: 'Behold, he is in thy power, only spare his life.'
- e) 7 And the Satan went forth from the presence of Jahweh, and he smote Job with a grievous ulcer,

from the sole of his foot to his crown ; 8 and he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal, and he sat among the ashes.

9 And his wife said unto him : ' Dost thou still hold fast to thine integrity ? Blaspheme God and die.' 10 But he said unto her : ' As one of the foolish women might speak, so speakest thou ! We receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil ? ' In all this Job sinned not with his lips.

f) 11 And when Job's three friends heard of all this misfortune that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Sophar the Namaathite ; and they met together by appointment, to come to condole with him, and to comfort him.

12 And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, they knew him not ; so they cried out and wept, and each rent his mantle, and they threw dust upon their heads in desolation.

13 And they sat down with him upon the ground, seven days and seven nights, and none spoke a word unto him ; for they saw that his sorrow was very great. iii. 1 After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed his day.

#### CRITICAL NOTES.

- i. 5. 1. וְקָלָלָהּ (G. Targ. Syr.). M T וְבָרְכוּ 11. 1. וְקָלָלָהּ  
(Targ. Syr.). M T וְבָרְכָהּ 18. 1. עַד. M T עַד ii. 5. 1. וְקָלָלָהּ  
(Targ. Syr.). M T וְבָרְכָהּ 9. 1. קָלָל (Syr.). M T בָּרַךְ  
12. Omit הַשְׂמִימָה (cf. Ex. viii. 10) or read בְּשִׂמְמָה or בְּשִׂמְמָה.

## COMMENTARY.

## a) i. 1-5. Job's character, family, etc.

1. *The land of Uz.* The exact situation is not quite certain ; but all the Biblical and other data point to the region of Edom, or, as stated in the appendix to the Septuagint, 'in the confines of Edom and Arabia' (xlii. 18. Cf. Dhorme, *Le Pays de Job*, *Rev. biblique*, 1911, pp. 102ff). In the Bible, the name *Job* is found in Ezech. xiv. 14, 20 ; Eccclus. xlix. 9 ; Tob. ii. 12, 15 (Vulg.) and James v. 11, always in reference to the hero of this book. In the Tell-el-Amarna tablets it is found in the form *Aiābu*, as the name of the king of Pehilim or Pella (cf. Knudtzon, no. 256, 6, 13). It is therefore not the invention of the writer, and it is useless to attempt to give it a symbolical meaning (e.g. 'the hated one,' or 'the penitent'). The precise derivation of the name is uncertain (cf. Peters, *ad loc.*). *Perfect . . . avoided evil.* Job fulfilled the ideal of perfection in his relations with God and man. He was virtuous in disposition, and his actions conformed to God's law ; he was faithful to his obligations both to God and to his fellow-men.

2. His numerous family and his wealth proclaimed to men that he enjoyed the friendship of God. A numerous family was regarded as God's greatest blessing (Ps. cvii. 3 ; cxxviii. 3).

3. The description of Job's wealth indicates that he was not a mere nomad. He had 500 yoke of oxen, and, according to i. 14, these were used for ploughing ; his children had houses, and he himself took part in the life of the 'city' (xxix. 7ff). The numbers seven, three, ten, are clearly symbolical. Compare the description of the wealth of the Patriarchs in Gen. xii. 16 ; xxvi. 14. *The children of the east* comprise the inhabitants of the territory east of the Jordan Valley, the nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes of Moab, Edom, etc. Cf. Jer. xlix. 28 ; Ezech. xxv. 4, 10.

4-5. Job was not only pious himself, but took care that his children also should be free from sin. There is question, not of deliberate sins, but of sins of 'inadvertence' or 'ignorance,' which they might have committed on the occasion of the family festivals. These banquets were held in cycles of seven, and at the end of each cycle, Job offered a sacrifice of expiation, and a new cycle began. *He sanctified them*, i.e. he made them undergo certain rites of purification in preparation for the sacrifice. *Blasphemed.* The Hebrew has 'blessed,' a euphemism substituted by the scribes to avoid placing the Divine Name beside an opprobrious term (cf. i. 11 ; ii. 5, 9).

## b) 6-12. The first scene at the heavenly court.

6. Having described Job's absolute integrity and happiness, the writer now tells, how, notwithstanding this, he is smitten with calamity. The Satan has attributed his piety to selfishness,

and God has given him leave to put Job's piety to the test. *Sons of God*, i.e. the angels, members of the category of heavenly beings. Compare the use of the expression 'sons of men' = human beings. The angels were regarded as God's agents in the government of the world (cf. Dan. x. 13, 20, 21; xii. 1). The scene is, of course, purely imaginary; and the story in 1 Kings xxii. 19-23, in which the prophet Michaeas describes his vision of the heavenly court, is a close parallel. *The Satan*, i.e. 'the adversary.' The word has the article, and is therefore not a proper name. The title is given to the angel whose function it was to observe the conduct of men, and to accuse them before God if they sinned. The title occurs again in Zach. iii. 1-2, as that of the angel who stood at the right hand of Joshue to accuse him (cf. Ps. cix. 6). Later, the word became a proper name to designate the instigator of sin (1 Chr. xxi. 1).

7-8. As the other angels have no further connection with the story, the author confines his attention to the Satan. Like the others, he is called upon to give an account of his stewardship. But as the writer is not interested in the affairs of men in general, he again passes on to the case of Job. God endorses the estimate of Job's piety given by the author himself in i. 1, and challenges the Satan to find a flaw in his character.

9. The Satan implicitly admits the truth of the description, but attributes Job's piety to motives of self-interest.

10. God has protected him and his belongings, and in addition, He has blessed him with abundant crops (work of his hands), and multiplied his flocks (his substance). No wonder that Job is pious and upright.

11. Instead of protecting, let God but smite Job, and see the result. *Blaspheme*. Heb. 'bless' (cf. 5).

12. God accepts the challenge. He takes away the 'hedge' which He has put about Job, and leaves him open to attack. But, for the present, only his property (including his family) is to be affected; his own person is to be spared.

c) 13-22. The first series of calamities. In a single day Job loses his stock, his slaves and his children; yet his piety remains unaltered.

13. The date—that of the feast in the house of the eldest brother—is important. On that very day, according to his custom, Job had offered a sacrifice of expiation for any possible sins committed during the cycle of feasts which had just ended. Their fate could not be attributed to chastisement for sin.

14. The same formula is used to describe the four disasters which follow; each is sudden and complete, only the messenger escaping to tell the tale. The first and third are due to men, the second and fourth to the forces of nature (the act of God).

15. The first calamity—the destruction of the oxen and asses. *The Sabeans* are mentioned in vi. 19 in conjunction with the people of Tema as traders; in Gen. x. 7; xxv. 23, Saba is mentioned in connection with Dedan, another Arab tribe. They

were, therefore, in all probability, a nomadic tribe on the southern border of the land of Uz.

16. The second calamity—the loss of the flocks. *Fire of God* i.e. lightning (2 Kings i. 10, 12, 14).

17. The third calamity—loss of the camels. *The Chaldeans*, according to Dhorme (*R.B.* 1910, pp. 384ff), were Aramean nomads who lived along the shore of the Persian Gulf, therefore east of the land of Uz. They were marauders like the Sabeans.

18–19. The fourth calamity—loss of his children. The Satan chose the moment when all were gathered together under one roof. The wind struck 'the four corners' i.e. completely destroyed it.

20. Job's grief. Rending the garments and shaving the head were customary signs of grief (Esdras ix. 3, 5; Jer. vii. 29; Mich. i. 16).

21. His resignation. Instead of cursing God, as the Satan claimed he would, he blessed God, even though he thinks that God Himself is the author of his misfortunes. *Naked . . . thither*. The language is incorrect, unless we suppose that in the latter part of the sentence he is referring to the earth as the 'mother of all things' (Ecclus. xl. 1). According to Ps. cxxxix. the body is fashioned in the depths of the earth. The meaning is, that he came from dust, and will return to dust.

d) ii. 1–6. The second scene at the heavenly court. God points out that Job has stood the test. The Satan now claims that Job's patience will give way if his body is afflicted, and obtains permission to put him to this further test. But once again the Satan is foiled.

1–3. These verses are practically a repetition of i. 6–8, except for the addition of 3b, which emphasises the Satan's failure in the first trial. *In vain*. The Hebrew word can mean either 'in vain' or 'without cause.' In the former case, the emphasis is on the futility of the Satan's attack; in the latter, the emphasis is on the unmerited character of Job's suffering. The former seems preferable.

4–5. The expression 'skin for skin' is evidently proverbial; but the precise meaning is not clear. Peters compares the description of the *lex talionis* in Exod. xxi. 23: 'life for life, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,' and holds that the contrast is between Job's own skin and that of his children; Job is so self-seeking that he is unaffected by his children's fate, as long as his own skin is safe. Dhorme holds that the contrast is between 'skin' and 'bone and flesh'; man is prepared to sacrifice a less important member to save one more important. The contrast is rather between a calamity which affects Job's person and one which affects his property; the latter cannot be compared with one's person; only a man's body can be compared with a man's body. So far, only the secondary things have been taken away from Job, but if his own person is affected, the consequence will be different.

e) ii. 7-10. Job's second calamity.

7. *A grievous ulcer.* Job's disease is usually identified with leprosy, the symptoms of which are supposed to correspond to Job's descriptions of his own suffering. But the writer does not use the word for 'leprosy,' and is content with the vague description of 'ulcer.' Job's own descriptions of his malady are poetical and highly coloured, and must be treated as such.

8. *Among the ashes.* The Greek text adds 'without the city,' and this has given rise to the common view that Job retired outside the city. But the text itself does not say this, and the presence of his wife would rather indicate that he was still at his own house.

9. Job's wife echoes the words of God (ii. 3) and of the Satan (ii. 5) about Job's piety; she is convinced that God has afflicted him without reason, and so he has no longer any reason to be pious towards Him. Let him curse God, and so put an end to his misery.

10. *Foolish* is used here in the moral rather than the intellectual sense = 'impious.' For the expression of Job's resignation cf. i. 21. The conclusion is identical with i. 22, except that 'with his lips' replaces 'neither uttered he folly against God.' Thus Job repudiates every suggestion of impiety, and once again the Satan is foiled, and now disappears from the story. The author's purpose is achieved; Job's innocence is beyond question; it is recognised by God, admitted by the Satan and expressly stated by the writer himself at the conclusion of each of Job's trials. The stage is now set for the Dialogue.

f) ii. 11-13. The coming of Job's three friends.

11. The three friends are from three different tribes, but all are Edomites. *Temán*, according to Eusebius (*Onom.* ed. Lagarde, p. 264), was 15 miles distant from Petra. *Shuh*, according to Gen. xxv, 2-3, was son of Abraham and Keturah, and uncle of Dedan and Saba. *Naamah* has been identified with *Gebel Na'am*, about 38 miles east of Tebuk (Jaussen et Savignac, *Mission archéologique en Arabie*, I. p. 64). Thus all the evidence leads us to the district adjacent to the land of Uz, the 'confines of Edom and Arabia.' The Edomites were noted for their wisdom (Abd. 8, 9; cf. 1 K. iv. 30), but more especially the Temanites (Jer. xlix. 7).

12. Job is so disfigured by his disease that they scarcely recognise him (cf. Is. liii. 14). *In desolation.* The Hebrew has 'to heaven,' and if the text is correct, the word is probably, as most critics maintain, a gloss based on Exod. ix. 8-10. But a trifling change gives the word for 'desolation' or 'appalment.'

13. Their mourning is as for one already dead. The mourning for the dead lasted seven days (Gen. 1. 10; 1 Sam. xxxi. 13). They are so overcome they are unable to speak. Cf. 'The elders sit upon the ground, and keep silence; they have cast up dust upon their heads; they have girded themselves with sackcloth' (Lam. ii. 10).

iii. 1. *After this*, i.e. after the interval of seven days.

SECTION II  
THE DIALOGUE  
CHAPTERS II-XXXI





### JOB'S PLAINT, iii. 2-26.

*Argument.* Job curses the day of his birth and the night of his conception, and longs for death and the peace of Sheol in preference to his present misery.

a) Curse of the day and the night. Let the day be not only deprived of light, but enveloped in the densest darkness and clouds (3-5). Let the night be eliminated from the calendar, deprived of the light of stars and moon and dawn; let it witness no scenes of revelry, and be the terror even of those whose element is the darkness (6-9).

b) If only he had never been conceived, or that he had died in the womb or at birth, or in infancy through neglect (10-12)! For then he would enjoy the peace of Sheol, in company with kings and princes, or with the untimely-born, the highest and lowest in the scale of life (13-16). For in Sheol class-distinctions are no more (17-19). To the miserable, life is a curse and death a blessing (20-23), and constant suffering, mental anguish without respite are his lot (24-26).

*Strophic arrangement* : 3 : 4 : 3.

iii. 2 And Job answered and said :

- 3 Perish the day on which I was born,  
And the night which said : ' A man is conceived.'
- 4 That day, let it be darkness !  
Let not God regard it from above,  
Neither let the light shine upon it !
- 5 Let darkness and death-shade claim it !  
Let clouds settle upon it !  
Let the day's eclipse affright it !
- 6 That night, let dense darkness seize it !  
Let it not be united with the days of the year,  
Into the number of the months let it not come !
- 7 Lo, that night, let it be desolate !  
Let no joyous shouting enter it !
- 8 Let them curse it that curse the day,  
That are ready to rouse up Leviathan !
- 9 Let the stars of its twilight be darkened !  
Let it look for light, but look in vain !  
And let it not behold the eyelids of the dawn !

- 10 Oh would that He had shut up the doors of the womb,  
And so hid trouble from mine eyes !
- 11 Wherefore did I not die in the womb ?  
Come forth from the belly and expire ?
- 12 Why did the knees receive me ?  
And why the breasts, that I should suck ?
- 13 For then I should have lain down, and been quiet,  
I should have slept, then rest had been mine ;
- 14 With kings and counsellors of the earth,  
Who had built up waste places for themselves ;
- 15 Or with princes who had possessed gold,  
Who had filled their houses with silver ;
- 16 Or like the hidden, still-born babe, that was not,  
Like infants who never saw the light.
- 17 There the wicked cease from troubling,  
And there the weary are at rest ;
- 18 The prisoners are at ease together,  
And hear not the voice of the taskmaster ;
- 19 Small and great, there are the same,  
And the servant is free from his master.
- 20 Why is light given to one that is in travail ?  
And life to those in sorrow ?
- 21 Who long for death, and it cometh not,  
And seek for it more than for hidden treasures ;
- 22 Who are glad unto exultation,  
And rejoice when they reach the grave ;
- 23 To a man whose way is hid,  
And whom God hath hedged in ?
- 24 For as my food my sighing cometh,  
And my roarings are poured out as water ;
- 25 Should I fear a thing, it cometh upon me,  
And that which I dread cometh to me ;
- 26 I have no ease, and I have no quiet,  
And I have no rest, and trouble cometh,

## CRITICAL NOTES.

iii. 5c. 1. **בְּמִרְיָי**. M T **בְּמִרְיָי**. 6b. 1. **יַחַד** ( $\sqrt{\text{יַחַד}}$ , *cf.* Targ. Vulg. Syr. Sym.). M T **יַחַד**. 10a. 1. **לֹא**. M T **לֹא**. This reading is demanded by **לֹא יִהְיֶה** of v. 15. For the construction ("if... then") *cf.* Job vi. 3; viii. 6; xiii. 19; xiv. 16; I Sam. xiii. 13; xiv. 30; Num. xxii. 29; xxiii. 23; Gen. xxxi. 42; xliii. 10. 16a. 1. **לֹא הָיָה** (**א** dittogr). M T **לֹא אָחִיָּה**.

## COMMENTARY.

3-5. Job curses the day of his birth. Cf. Jer. xx. 14-18.

3. The first verse is introductory; 3a is developed in the first strophe, 3b in the second. *The night which said.* All the Versions, except Targum, translate 'the night on which one said.' This is possible if we follow the Greek reading of the next clause, that is, if the reference in both clauses is to his birth. But the Versions may have been influenced by Jer. xx. 15, in which the prophet curses the man who brought his father news of his birth. If we follow the Hebrew reading, we must take 'night' as subject; the night is the witness of all that takes place in it, and so can reveal the secret of his conception. *A man is conceived.* The Greek has 'behold, a man,' which is preferred by some critics (Beer, Budde, Peters). In this case both the 'day' and the 'night' are those of his birth, and there is no reference to his conception. But, as stated above, the Greek reading is probably influenced by Jeremias, and the latter does not mention the night at all, only the day; whereas Job curses both the night and the day. In the third strophe (10-12), he refers to his conception as well as his birth, and hence the Hebrew text, which refers to both, is to be preferred here.

4. The curse of the day is twofold: that it be deprived of light (4), and that it be enveloped in darkness (5). By the creation of light God brought about the alternation of day and night (Gen. i. 3). Job now prays that God withhold His creative act as far as that day is concerned; with the withdrawal of God's care, no light will shine upon it, and darkness will continue.

5. The opposite to light is darkness, clouds and extraordinary phenomena like the eclipse, which mysteriously darkens the sun, and terrifies men. *Claim it.* If God withhold His light, primeval darkness will continue to rule. Instead of light, let Him send *clouds* to make the darkness more dense. *Day's eclipse*, lit. 'darknesses of day.' The word 'darknesses' is used only here; but the root is found both in Syriac and Assyrian, and the meaning is certain. Dhorme thinks that the reference is to dense fogs which turn day into night like the darkness of Egypt (Ex. xxi.-xxiii.). Renan takes it to refer to the eclipse of the sun. The use of the verb 'affright' indicates that there is reference to some extraordinary phenomenon which inspires terror.

6-9. The curse of the night. The curse of the night likewise comprises darkness (6) and absence of light (9); but between these come two other curses: that it may not witness the rejoicing of those who are happy (7), and that it may have terrors even for the criminals who ordinarily love the darkness (8). Dhorme suggests that verse 9 originally stood after verse 6.

6. *That night.* Owing to the apparent contradiction between 'that night' and 'the days of the year,' some critics (Honthelm, Peters) change the text to 'that day,' thus making this verse a part of the curse of the day. But, among the Hebrews, the day

was reckoned from sunset to sunset, and so each day of the calendar began with the night. *Dense darkness*. The word is not the ordinary word for 'darkness'; it is the word used in x. 22 for the darkness of Sheol.

7. The night is the time for conviviality; but let that night never be a witness of rejoicing. *Desolate*, i.e. gloomy, sorrowful. In Is. xlix. 21 the word means 'sterile.'

8. The meaning is obscure. Knabenbauer, Duhm, and many moderns, see in the verse a reference to magicians who can by their words make the days of good or evil omen; Dillmann and Budde take it to refer to the eclipse of the sun or moon; the Leviathan being the monster who was supposed to devour the moon, thus causing the eclipse. Dhorme takes the first part of the verse to refer to the unfortunate, who, like Job, curse the day of their birth, while the second part has a mythological allusion. The best interpretation is that given by Peters. 'They that curse the day' are the wicked, who pursue their nefarious enterprises under the cover of night (xxiv. 13ff; xxxviii. 15). Let even these, who ordinarily prefer night to day, regard that night as accursed. In xli. 2, 'to rouse up Leviathan' is referred to as a dangerous enterprise. Let that night have terrors even for those who are bold enough to risk a struggle even with Leviathan.

9. May that night be without stars at evening, without moon, and without dawn (cf. 4). *Twilight*. The word sometimes means the evening (vii. 4; xxiv. 15), sometimes the morning twilight (Ps. cxix. 147). It is usually taken in the latter sense here, and thus all three members refer to the light of dawn. But this verse has the same function here as verse 4 in the curse of the day, viz. to describe the absence of light. It is more to the point to state that the night itself is devoid of light (by the absence of moon and stars) than to state that it is not followed by the day. Evening, midnight and morning are all deprived of light. *Eyelids of the dawn*, the rays of light which are seen while the sun is still beneath the horizon (cf. xli. 18).

10-12. Oh that God had prevented my conception, or that I had died in the womb or at birth, or that I were left to perish through neglect!

10. The Versions all agree with the Hebrew in making 'night' the subject of the verb: 'because it shut not up, etc.' But the apodosis which begins in 13 with 'for then' indicates that the particle here should be translated 'Oh that.' The same mistake in pointing has been made in Jud. xxi. 22; 1 Sam. xiii. 13; xx. 14, and in Job ix. 33 (see critical note). The subject may be indefinite, and the form equivalent to a passive; but it is better to regard 'God' as the subject, who alone can 'shut the womb' and prevent child-bearing (cf. Gen. xxix. 31; 1 Sam. i. 5).

11. Or, since He did not prevent conception, why did I not die in the womb or at birth? *In the womb*, lit. 'from the womb.' Cf. 'because he slew me not from the womb, and so my mother

would have been my grave' (Jer. xx. 17), a passage which shows that 'from the womb' means before birth. Both in Jeremias and here, Greek and Vulg. actually have 'in the womb.' The second clause refers to death immediately after birth. Cf. x. 18f.

12. Or, if I survived birth, why was I not left to die of neglect? *The knees.* Most commentators see in this a reference to the custom by which the father received the newborn infant on his knees, to indicate that he took responsibility for its maintenance (cf. Gen. i. 23). According to Dhorme, the reference is to the mother's knees, and quotes a parallel from Eccles. xv. 2: 'She (Wisdom) will receive him as a mother, and as a young wife she will take him up, and she will feed him.' This is more probable in the context. The verb 'receive' must be supplied in 12b: 'why did the breasts *receive* me, etc.'

#### 13-16. The peace of Sheol.

13. *For then*, i.e. if the wish expressed in the previous strophe were fulfilled. The aspect of Sheol which appeals to Job in his present mood is its unruffled peace. The four verbs—lie down, remain quiet, sleep, rest—mark four successive stages; the last (rest) is the blessed result of the other three.

14. In Sheol he would have as companions both the mighty who were leaders of men, and the most abject type of humanity, the untimely born. *Waste places.* This is taken by many critics to refer to the tombs of the great which are now in ruins, or to tombs like the pyramids of Egypt built in desert places. But, like the clause 'who possessed gold' in the next verse, it is more likely that it refers to the glory of the kings during their lives. In xv. 28 Eliphaz describes the tyrants who dwelt in 'cities that were destroyed,' and Job is thinking of the great conquerors who built up great cities on the ruins of those they had taken by conquest. The implied contrast between the great and the untimely born favours this view.

15. Here again some see a reference to the tombs of the rich which often contained the treasures buried with them. But the use of the active verb ('who filled') does not favour this, and in xxii. 8 we have the phrase 'filled their houses with good things' in reference to earthly prosperity.

16. In Eccles. vi. 3 the wealthy and the untimely-born are juxtaposed as here. There is therefore no justification for the transfer of this verse to the previous strophe (cf. Dhorme, Peake). Moreover, as we have seen, the still-born are referred to in 11a, and this verse would be superfluous there. *That was not.* The present text 'I will not be' is due to a scribal error (ditto-graphy). Cf. x. 19: 'I should be as though I had never been.'

17-19. In Sheol class-distinctions are no more. In this strophe each verse presents two opposing groups: the wicked and their victims (17), the prisoners and their overseer (18), and the slave and his master (19).

17. The *wicked* are those who oppress and wrong their fellow-men (xv. 20 ; xxvii. 13). *The weary*, lit. 'the weary in strength' the oppressed and down-trodden. Cf. the expression 'mighty in strength' (ix. 4 ; xxxvi. 19).

18. *Prisoners*. There is question of prisoners of war and others condemned to forced labour under an overseer (cf. Ex. v. 6-14).

19. In Sheol there is an end of the social distinctions to be found on earth. *The same*. The third personal pronoun is used in this sense in Is. xli. 4 ; xliii. 10, 13 ; xlv. 4 ; xlviii. 12 ; Ps. cii. 28.

20-23. Death is a happy release for the miserable.

20. Having dwelt on the peace of Sheol, he now contrasts with it the life of the unfortunate in general, and his own. Why is light *given* ? The text has 'why doth He give ?' But the passive, which is read by all the Versions, is preferable. Light is the symbol of life, as darkness is of death (cf. xxxiii. 28, 30 ; xviii. 18). *To those in sorrow*, lit. 'to the bitter of soul.' Cf. xxi. 25, where it is parallel to 'who never tasted happiness.'

21. Death is desired as a release from torment. Cf. vi. 8 ; vii. 15, where Job himself expresses his longing for death. Death for such as he is a blessing rather than a curse.

23. We must supply 'why is light given' from verse 20. The change from plural to singular implies that Job is applying the general principle to himself. The happy man is one who has a smooth path (Is. xxvi. 7 ; Prov. xv. 19), and on whose way a light shines (xxii. 28) ; the unfortunate is one whose path is beset by insuperable obstacles, and who is enveloped in darkness (cf. xvii. 9 ; xix. 8).

24-26. Job's misery. This strophe is intended to mark the contrast between the peace of Sheol and his present torments. The terms of 26 echo those of 13 and 17.

24. His sighing and cries of anguish have been his food and drink ; cf. Is. xxx. 20 : 'the bread of adversity and the water of affliction,' and also Ps. xlii. 3 ; lxxx. 5 ; cii. 9. *As my food*. The Revised Version translates '*before my food*,' which is indeed the usual meaning of the preposition. But the parallelism here and the use of the word in 1 Sam. i. 16 show that it has also the sense 'like' or 'in the manner of.' *My roarings*, loud cries of pain (cf. Ps. xxii. 2 ; xxxii. 3).

25. Unlike the inhabitants of Sheol (17-19), he is not free from fear ; and, moreover, that which he fears comes upon him.

26. Note the repetition of the words 'ease,' 'quiet,' 'rest' which emphasise the contrast between his present torments and the peace of Sheol (13).

## FIRST CYCLE OF SPEECHES IV.-XIV.

*General Character.* The three speeches of the friends of Job give a complete exposition of the traditional doctrine of retribution, and of its application to Job's case. God is just; He will utterly destroy the wicked; if He send affliction to the just, they can recover their happiness by repentance. Job is one of the latter class; but he has unwittingly committed some faults, and for these he has been chastised. Let him therefore repent, and he will recover his happiness.

In his first two speeches Job deals with his own case. He admits that the language of his opening speech was lacking in restraint; but he has committed no sin which could have deserved such chastisement. His friends do him wrong in accusing him of sin. His suffering is due to the arbitrary will of God, who allots pleasure and pain to men without regard to their moral character. In his final speech he deals with the subject of retribution in general. His view is the direct antithesis of that of his three friends: the pious man is a laughing-stock, scorned and oppressed by the mighty, while the wicked are happy and content.



## ELIPHAZ'S FIRST SPEECH, iv.-v.

*Argument.* The Speech may be divided into four parts :—

a) The justice of God. In the past, Job has been wont to help and encourage other sufferers with the hope of recovery through repentance. Why does he not apply the same principle to his own case? His integrity gives him hope of recovery (1-6). For experience teaches that it is not the innocent but the wicked that are destroyed by God's wrath (7-11).

b) The problem of the suffering of the just. Eliphaz relates the story of a vision which he had (12-16), in which his ghostly visitor explained that, in comparison with God, man is naturally impure, and therefore liable to chastisement (17-21).

c) Practical conclusion. Since all men, even the just, are liable to chastisement, suffering must not be met with a spirit of rebellion and resentment at God's action, for refusal to repent leads to ruin (v. 1-5); but with a spirit of resignation and repentance, and a humble petition for pardon (6-11). For God is kind and merciful, the champion of the lowly and the enemy of the proud (12-16).

d) The blessings which follow repentance. Repentance will bring relief from suffering, and immunity from all dangers in the future (17-22), prosperity and happiness, long life, and death after a ripe old age (23-27).

*Strophic arrangement* : 5 : 5 : 5.

iv. 1 And Eliphaz, the Temanite, answered and said :

2 Shall we address a word to thee who art wearied ?

Yet who can refrain from speaking ?

3 Behold, thou hast corrected many,

And hands grown feeble thou hast strengthened ;

4 Thy words have raised up the fallen,

And drooping knees thou didst make firm ;

5 But now it cometh to thyself, and thou art wearied,

It reacheth unto thee, and thou art dismayed ;

6 Is not thy piety thy confidence ?

And the integrity of thy ways thy hope ?

7 Reflect now, who that was innocent ever perished ?

And where were the upright cut off ?

8 As I have seen, they that plough iniquity,

And sow trouble, reap it ;

9 By the breath of God they perish,

And by the blast of His wrath they are consumed ;

10 The roar of the lion, and the voice of the lioness,  
And the teeth of the young lions are broken ;  
11 The old lion hath perished for lack of prey,  
And the cubs of the lioness are scattered abroad.

12 Now to me was brought a word, secretly,  
And mine ear received a whisper thereof ;  
13 In thoughts from visions of the night,  
When deep sleep falleth on men,  
14 Fear came upon me, and shuddering,  
And trembling shook my bones ;  
15 Then a wind passed over my face,  
And made the hair of my flesh bristle up ;  
16 One stood there, whose form I knew not,  
A figure was before my eyes,  
A gentle voice I heard :

17 “ Can a man be just before God ?  
Can a man be pure before his Maker ?  
18 Lo, in His servants He trusteth not,  
And in His angels He findeth folly ;  
19 How much more in them that dwell in houses of clay,  
Whose foundation is in the dust ?  
They are crushed like the moth,  
20 Betwixt morn and even they are broken down,  
They perish for ever, and none can restore them.  
21 Is not excellence taken away from them ?  
They die, and not in wisdom.”

v. 1 Call now, is there any that will answer thee ?  
And to whom of the holy ones wilt thou turn ?  
2 Nay, vexation killeth the fool,  
And passion slayeth the misguided one ;  
3 When I have seen one who was obstinate,  
I cursed his abode instantly :  
4 “ His children shall be far from well-being,  
They shall be crushed in the gate, and none shall  
deliver them ;

- 5 Whose harvest, in hunger shall he pine for it,  
And God shall take it away by blight,  
And they, thirsty, shall yearn for their wealth."
- 6 Since iniquity cometh not out of the earth,  
Nor doth trouble sprout out of the ground,  
7 But man is born for trouble,  
As the vultures fly aloft,  
8 Then I would appeal to God,  
And unto God would I address my plea,  
(9 *Who doth great things, beyond reckoning,  
Marvellous things, without number ;)*  
10 Who bestoweth rain upon the earth,  
And sendeth water upon the fields,  
11 To set on high them that are low,  
And that they that mourn be exalted to happiness.
- 12 He frustrateth the devices of the crafty,  
And their hands cannot achieve success ;  
13 He taketh the wise in their own craftiness,  
And the design of the perverse is foiled ;  
14 In the day-time they meet with darkness,  
At noon-tide they grope as in the night ;  
15 But He saveth the guileless from the sword,  
And the poor from the hand of the mighty ;  
16 And so the lowly hath hope,  
And iniquity shutteth her mouth.
- 17 Lo, happy is the man whom God correcteth,  
Refuse not then the chastening of the Almighty !  
18 For He woundeth, and He bindeth up,  
He smiteth, and His hands heal ;  
19 In six troubles He will deliver thee,  
And in seven no evil shall touch thee ;  
20 In famine He will save thee from death,  
And in war from the power of the sword,  
21 From the scourge of the tongue thou shalt be hid ;  
And thou shalt not fear the robber when he cometh,  
22 At devastation and dearth thou shalt laugh,  
And the beasts of the earth thou shalt not fear.

- 23 For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field,  
 And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee ;
- 24 And thou shalt know that thy tent is safe,  
 And thou shalt visit thy abode, and miss nothing ;
- 25 And thou shalt know that thy seed is numerous,  
 And thy offspring as the grass of the earth ;
- 26 And thou shalt enter the grave in full vigour,  
 As the shock of corn cometh up in its season.
- 27 Lo, this we have searched out, so it is,  
 We have heard it, do thou mark it well.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

- iv. 2a. 1. הַנֶּשֶׁא (Theod. Aq. Sym. Vulg.). M T הַנֶּסֶה.  
 14b. 1. וְרִיב (√ רִיב = tremble. *cf.* Ass. *rābu*). M T וְרִב.  
 19c. 1. יִדְכֹּאוּ (1 MS. Syr. Vulg.). M T יִדְכֹּאוּם. 20b. 1. מְשִׁיב.  
 M T מְשִׁים. 21a. 1. יֵתֶר מֵהֶם (*cf.* xxii. 20 ; xxx. 11). M T  
 יֵתֶרם. 5a. 1. יֵאבֶלֹ (cf. Ps. cxix. 131 = שֹׂאף). M T  
 וְאֶל-מִצְנֵים (cf. Gen. xli. 13). M T וְאֶל-מִצְנֵים.  
 5c. 1. וְשֹׂאֵף צִמָּה (Aq. Sym. Syr. Vulg.). M T וְשֹׂאֵף צִמָּה.  
 5 a-b. transp. post 3 ? 9. Omit (=x. 10). 15a. 1. פְּתִיִּים.  
 M T מְפִיִּים. 21b. 1. מְשֹׁרֵר. M T מְשֹׁרֵר (*cf.* 22a). 27b. 1.  
 שְׁמַעְנָה. M T שְׁמַעְנָה.

## COMMENTARY.

iv. 1-5. Let Job apply to his own case the principles which he applied to other sufferers in the past.

1. Eliphaz begins by apologising on behalf of his friends for having remained silent so long (*cf.* ii. 13). He felt that what he had to say would be irksome to one whose sufferings were already great; but the unpleasant task can be shirked no longer. *Shall we address.* The text may also be translated: 'Shall we *essay* a word.' *Wearied*, depressed, discouraged.

3-4. Job often gave advice to those who were tempted to lose faith in God's justice under stress of calamity. *Cf.* xxvi. 2-4. *Hands grown feeble* and *drooping knees* indicate lack of energy or spirit (*cf.* 2 Sam. ii. 7; iv. 1; Is. xxxv. 3). The advice Job then gave was that which Eliphaz now gives Job himself, viz. to repent, and by repentance recover his happiness.

5. *Facile omnes, quum valemus, recta consilia aegrotis damus; tu, si hic sis, aliter sentias* (Terence, *Andria*, II, 1, 9).

6. Eliphaz admits, as Bildad does in viii. 5, and Sophar in xi. 4-5, that Job is not to be classed with the 'wicked.' That fact should give him hope. For, as Eliphaz proceeds to show, only the wicked are suddenly cut off. The just may suffer, but they have hope of recovery by repentance. Job's piety is his safeguard; and he should know that his sufferings are due to trifling faults which can be expiated by repentance.

7-11. It is not the innocent, but the wicked who are cut off. This strophe summarises the law of retribution according to the accepted teaching. Eliphaz claims that it is Job's experience as well as his own (*cf.* Ps. xxxvii. 25).

7. *Perished . . . cut off.* The reference is to a sudden calamity like that which carried off Job's children. It is only the deliberate mischief-makers, the enemies of God and men, who suffer that fate. Job does not belong to that category, and so his life has been spared.

8. *Plough . . . sow.* The metaphor is chosen to emphasise the fact that there is question of deliberate, calculated crime, not mere sins of ignorance or inadvertence. Compare the distinction made in Numbers xv. 29-30 between sins committed 'in error' and sins committed 'with a high hand' (*cf.* Ps. xix. 13-14).

10-11. In these two verses the 'lions' symbolise the wicked who attack and devour the just, and the 'lion-cubs' the children of the wicked who suffer for their fathers' crimes. The figure is a common one (*cf.* Ps. xvii. 12; xxii. 14, 22; xxxiv. 11) and Job uses it in xxix. 17: 'I broke the jaws of the wicked, and from their teeth I plucked the prey.' The time inevitably comes when the power of the wicked is broken (10), and they and their children suffer the penalty of their crimes (11). Eliphaz explains the meaning of the metaphor in v. 3-5: both father and sons endure poverty, and the sons become the oppressed instead of the oppressors. The verb 'is stilled' must be supplied in 10a.

12-16. Eliphaz's vision. Having enunciated the law of retribution, Eliphaz now proceeds to deal with the problem of the suffering of the just. The solution was given to him in a vision which he now describes.

12. *Was brought . . . secretly*, lit. 'was stolen to me.' *A whisper*. Everything about the vision was vague and shadowy.

13. The revelation was given during the night, as he lay awake pondering on the things which he had seen in his dreams. As in the case of Sophar (xx. 2ff) the purpose of the vision is to remove his doubts concerning God's justice.

14. He first becomes conscious of some mysterious presence, which fills him with awe. *Trembling*. The Hebrew may be translated 'and the great number (i.e. all) my bones it shook.' But it is probable that here and in xxxiii. 19 we have a rare word for 'trembling' (cf. Ass. *ribu*). See Dhorme on xxxiii. 19.

15. Then he felt a *breath* pass over his face. This may be due to the current of air caused by the movement of his visitor, or to his breathing as he came nearer. The effect was to increase his terror.

16. At length the mysterious visitor becomes visible, but still nameless, a vague shadowy form. *A gentle voice*, lit. 'stillness and a voice' (cf. the 'still small voice' in which revelation came to Elias, 1 K. xix. 12). In the whole passage, the terms are deliberately chosen to give an atmosphere of mystery. The time was the stillness of the night, the messenger a vague dimly seen form, the voice a gentle whisper.

17-21. The revelation. Even the angels are not pure in comparison with God; much less man, whose body is of clay, whose span of life is brief, whose end is death.

17. Cf. xv. 14-16 (Eliphaz) and xxv. 4-6 (Sophar).

18. *His servants* are the angels of 18a. The argument is repeated in similar terms in xv. 15-16.

19a-b. The angels are heavenly beings, and like God Himself, immortal; man is of the earth and mortal. The *houses of clay* are their bodies; like houses of clay, whose foundations are not on the rock but on sand, they are unstable and perishable.

19c-20. These three clauses must be taken together to form a triplet. They are a development of 19b, and describe three characteristics of human nature which make man inferior to the angels: its frailty (19c), its brief existence (20a), and its inevitable death (20b).

*They are crushed*. The Hebrew has 'they crush them'; the Greek 'He crusheth them.' In either case we must regard the subject as indefinite, and therefore equivalent to the passive. But it is probable that the original actually read the passive. *Like a moth*, as easily as a moth (cf. Is. li. 8). *Betwixt morn and even*, cf. 'From day even to night wilt Thou make an end of me' (Is. xxxviii. 13). In vii. 2; xiv. 6, Job compares his life to the day of a hireling. Cf. Ps. xc. 5ff. *None can restore*. The Hebrew as it stands must be translated 'none regardeth'; but

the form of the verb is unusual, and as the reference is to the death of men in general, the meaning does not suit the context. Dhorme follows the Greek, which reads 'none can *save*' i.e. from death. The reading 'none can restore,' i.e. bring the dead back to life, is closer to the Hebrew consonants, and the thought has parallels in vii. 10; x. 21; xiv. 10-12.

21. This verse concludes the argument from the earthly origin of man. Such being the nature of man, how can he be compared with the angels, much less with God? Does not this deprive him of a claim to excellence?

*Their excellence.* The Hebrew word is usually translated 'tent-cord': 'Is not their *tent-cord* plucked up in them?' But, even granting that the word can mean 'tent-cord' (which is questionable), such a figure is completely out of place here. The essence of the whole argument in 19ff is the *earthly* origin of man, and the figure used is a 'house of clay,' not a 'tent.' Besides, such a statement would be a repetition of what has been more forcibly expressed in 19c-20. There is no trace of this interpretation in the Versions. The Vulg. Syr. and Targ. take the word in the usual sense of 'excess, excellence, or worth' (cf. Gen. xlix. 3; Prov. xvii. 7), and the word is used in a similar sense in xxii. 20 and xxx. 11. This is the meaning demanded by the context here. The earthly origin of man removes all claim to excellence as compared with the angels. *Not in wisdom.* Wisdom, according to Eliphaz, comes of old age and experience (xv. 7-10. cf. viii. 9); hence one whose life is but a 'day' cannot compare in wisdom with beings who are eternal.

v. 1-5. Resentment at God's just action is fatal. The circumstances visualised in the following strophe have a close parallel in the Speech of Elihu (xxxvi. 8-15). A just man who is 'held fast in the bonds of affliction' has two courses open to him: he may repent, and then he is restored to happiness (11-12), or he may refuse to repent, in which case he dies a premature death (13-15). Similarly, Eliphaz advises Job against the folly of showing vexation at God's action (1-5), and shows the wisdom of appealing to God for pardon (6-11).

1. Could Job hope to obtain the assistance of the angels if he were to question God's action? *Holy ones*, as in xv. 15, are the angels (cf. Zach. xiv. 5; Ps. lxxxix. 6-8).

2. A man who would act in that way would be a *fool*, and his *vexation* would prove his ruin. *Vexation* and *passion* do not refer to worry over misfortune which might bring on death (cf. Dhorme), but to resentment at God's action in sending misfortune to one who is not conscious of sin. It is the feeling of the 'impious in heart who cherish anger' (xxxvi. 13). Such a disposition constitutes a man one of the 'wicked,' and is punished by premature death (xxxvi. 14). In xv. 12-13, Eliphaz blames Job for showing resentment in this manner.

3. Whenever Eliphaz sees a man of this kind, he forthwith prophesies his ruin and that of his children. *Obstinate*, i.e. in his refusal to repent. The text is usually translated literally

'who had taken root,' i.e. who had been prosperous. Many, by a slight emendation, read 'who was rooted out,' which suits the context better. But, as the Arabic shows (*cf. sharisa*, ill-natured, cross), the verb can be used figuratively: 'to take root' in the moral sense, to be obstinate, which is precisely the meaning required here. *I cursed*, i.e. I pronounced accursed. The Greek and Syriac have the third person, and hence many critics read 'his abode *was cursed*.' But if Eliphaz is describing an actual event in the past, we should expect the tenses in the following verses to be past and not future. Dhorme is probably right in regarding the following verses as the content of the curse (or prediction). But it is still better to take the first clause as conditional: whenever I saw . . . I cursed.

4. Both the wicked man and his children will be reduced to poverty, and endure hunger and thirst owing to the failure of his crops. *Far from well-being*, i.e. they will be poor and miserable. *Crushed in the gate*. They themselves become the victims of unscrupulous oppressors. The 'gate' was the scene of the transaction of all public business, including the administration of justice (*cf. xxix. 7ff*).

5. The text of this verse is very corrupt. Lit. 'Whose harvest (or what they reaped) a hungry man shall eat, and unto from the thorns he taketh it, and snares pant for their wealth.' The third clause is easily emended by adopting the reading 'thirsty' (Aq. Sym. Vulg.) for 'snares,' and this is generally accepted. The first clause, as Torczyner remarks, reads like the description of a virtuous man who divides with the deserving poor (*cf. xxxi. 16ff*). We should have expected something like xxvii. 7: the just shall enjoy the fruit of his harvest. The second clause is still more strange. The 'thorns' are supposed to be those which cover the heap of corn to protect it from wild animals. Dhorme (following Winckler) reads 'hiding-places' for 'thorns,' which gives the bizarre picture of the hungry stealing the corn of the wicked and hiding it away.

The parallelism with 'thirsty' in 5c indicates that the 'hungry man' is the father. The parallelism is made still closer if we read 'shall pine for it' instead of 'shall eat' (*cf. Ps. cxix. 131*, where it is parallel to 'pant for'). In the second clause, 'unto from the thorns' is evidently incorrect, and a mere change of pointing gives 'with blight' (*cf. Gen. xli. 13*). The verse gives the cause of the poverty of the wicked man's children.

It is possible that 5a-b originally stood before verse 4. In this case, 3 and 5a-b refer to the father, 4 and 5c to his children.

6-11. As vexation leads to ruin, it is better to appeal to God's mercy. All men are by nature sinful; hence all men are liable to suffering, which is the due recompense of sin. Therefore, instead of finding fault with God's action, we should rather appeal to His mercy.

6. *Iniquity* (moral evil) and its consequence *trouble* (physical evil) are due to man himself; they are not things that come to



man from without. They are not like plants that grow spontaneously, they must be planted by men. Cf. 'they that plough iniquity . . . and sow trouble' (iv. 8).

7. Sin and suffering are inherent in man's nature. Cf. xiv. 1; Ps. xc. 10. *Born for trouble*. Dhorme and others read the active 'doth generate trouble'; but this is not necessary. What the writer means is that man is by nature liable to sin, and in consequence to chastisement. Cf. 'man is born a wild ass's colt' (xi. 12). *Vultures*. The meaning of the word is doubtful. It occurs only in Deut. xxxii. 24; Hab. iii. 5; Ps. lxxvi. 4; lxxviii. 48; Cant. viii. 6; Ecclus. xliii. 14, 17. In all except the last two instances it refers to some phenomenon akin to hail, pestilence and lightning, and hence some critics translate 'as sparks fly upward.' But in Ecclus. it certainly refers to birds of some kind, and is so understood by all the Versions here.

8. This verse forms the apodosis of the sentence which began in verse 6: 'seeing that . . . therefore.' *I would appeal*, i.e. if I were in a similar situation.

9. This verse is almost identical with ix. 10. It is not quite appropriate here, where the emphasis is on God's mercy and goodness, rather than on His omnipotence. As the rest of the speech is in five-verse strophes, this verse should probably be omitted as a gloss.

10. Rain from the heavens and springs from beneath the earth are among God's greatest blessings to men (cf. xxxvi. 27f; xxxviii. 25f; Ps. civ. 13; cxlvii. 5; Ecclus. xliii. 22).

11. The infinitive 'to set on high' depends on 'appeal' of verse 8. 'They that are low' and 'they that mourn' are those who, like Job, are enduring misfortunes because of some 'sins of ignorance.'

12-16. God resists the proud and exalts the humble. This strophe furnishes the motive for the appeal. The thought is more fully developed by Elihu in xxxvi. 8ff.

12. The *crafty*, like the *wise* and the *perverse* of the next verse, are the wicked who use the resources of human wisdom against the power and wisdom of God. Cf. Ps. xviii. 25-27. *Success*. The word is, with the exception of Is. xxviii. 29 and Mich. v. 9, peculiar to Job and Proverbs. It usually means 'wisdom' or 'counsel,' but here and in Mich. the realisation of the plan conceived, success.

13. He makes their own wicked deeds tend to their ruin. The thought is frequent in the Psalms (vii. 16, lvii. 7 etc.). *Perverse*, lit. 'tortuous,' they who try to achieve their object by deceit (Prov. viii. 8). *Foiled*, lit. 'is hastened,' i.e. they have not time to mature their plans, and so they fail.

14. They are helpless and confused, as men suddenly overtaken by impenetrable darkness. Compare the description of the helplessness of the exiles in Isaias: 'We grope for the wall like the blind . . . we stumble at noon-day as in the twilight' (Is. lix. 10. cf. Job xii. 24).

15. The *guileless*, and the *poor* are the victims of the classes described in 12-13. *Guileless*. The text is obviously corrupt: lit. 'He saveth from the sword from their mouth.' It is generally agreed that the object of the verb is concealed in one of the words translated 'from the sword' and 'from their mouth.' Various emendations have been suggested. The context suggests a word to contrast with 'crafty' of verse 12, and a slight change gives the word 'simple or guileless' instead of 'from their mouth.'

16. Such being the character of God, one must conclude that iniquity will be punished, and that the just man who accepts suffering with resignation and repentance has hope of recovery. *Shutleth her mouth*, i.e. suffers defeat, which renders her dumb with confusion. We find the opposite expression in 1 Sam. ii. 1: 'my mouth is enlarged,' to signify elation at success. Eliphaz has returned to the point from which he started: God rejects the impious, but will not utterly reject the just (iv. 6-7).

17-22. Repentance will bring relief from suffering, and immunity from danger in the future. Eliphaz now applies to Job's case the general principle laid down in the previous strophe. He must accept God's action in a spirit of humility and repentance.

17. Suffering is God's call to repentance (*cf.* xxxiii. 18ff). Compare Prov. iii. 11-12: 'Despise not the chastening of Jahweh . . . for whom Jahweh loveth He correcteth.'

18. *Cf.* Deut. xxxii. 39; Os. vi. 1.

19. *In six . . . in seven*. We have here a series like the numerical proverbs in Prov. vi. 16ff and xxx. 15ff. In all the latter instances, the number of things enumerated is the higher of the two alternatives, and if the same principle were followed we should expect to find *seven* calamities mentioned here. As only six are actually mentioned, many regard the numbers as equivalent to all possible troubles, however numerous. But it is to be noted that 'devastation' occurs twice (in 20b and 21a), and it is probable that in one case it is a corruption (see below on 20b). The calamities fall into two groups: those affecting Job himself—famine, war and calumny; and those affecting his property—robbery (?), devastation, failure of crops, and the ravages of wild beasts.

20-21a. Dangers to life—famine, sword and calumny. The combination of famine and war (or the sword) is a natural one, and is of frequent occurrence. The mention of the 'tongue' in this connection seems strange at first sight; but the tongue can be a weapon of destruction by making false accusations. We have a parallel in Is. liv. 17, where Israel is promised protection against weapons of war and against 'every tongue that contendeth with thee.' *Cf.* the story of Naboth in 1 K. xxi. 11-14, and also Jer. xviii. 18. *Thou shalt be hid*, i.e. protected.

21b-22. Dangers to property. As stated above (19), the word 'devastation' is repeated, and a different word is required to

make up the number seven. Besides the three dangers to property mentioned, the most obvious one would be 'robbery,' and the repetition of the final letter of the word in 21b suffices to get this meaning. A striking confirmation of this conjecture is to be found in Isaiah v. 5-6, where precisely these four plagues are to be sent against Jahweh's vineyard, viz. the spoiler (5a), wild beasts (5b), devastation (6a) and drought (6b).

23-27. Job's future happiness, prosperity, and long life.

23. Budde, Duhm and many others regard 23 and 22 as duplicates and reject one of them as a gloss. But the verses belong to different strophes, and as one strophe is a negative and the other a positive description of Job's future happiness, both are perfectly appropriate in the context. This verse states positively what verse 22 stated negatively. *Stones of the field.* The stones have to be carefully removed before planting a vineyard (Is. v. 2), and enemies sometimes rendered land unproductive by scattering stones on it (2 K. iii. 19). The very stones, the enemies of the agriculturist, will be his friends. *Beasts of the field.* In verse 22, the expression is 'beasts of the earth.' The change may be due to the fact that here the reference is to domestic animals, who will be his allies in the cultivation of the ground.

24. He will find his family in good health, and his flocks and herds unmolested. *Thy tent . . . thy abode.* The former refers to his family, the latter to his property, his flocks and herds. Compare Job's description of the prosperity of the wicked in xxi. 7ff. *Miss nothing.* Nothing will have been stolen, or lost, or devoured by wild beasts. The verb is used in this sense in Is. lxxv. 20; Prov. viii. 36; xix. 2.

25. He will rejoice in the possession of a large family (cf. xlii. 16: 'he saw his children and his children's children').

26. He will die in extreme old age, his body still free from disease or pain. In full *vigour*. The word occurs only here and xxx. 2, and the precise meaning is not certain. In Arabic, the root means 'to be firm,' hence, probably 'strength,' 'vigour.' Compare Job's description of the wicked man who dies with 'his thighs full of fat, and the marrow of his bones moist' (xxi. 24). Job will not have to endure a long and wasting illness; he will die in peace, having lived out his years to the full.

27. *We have searched out . . . we have heard.* Eliphaz represents his doctrine as derived both from research and from tradition.

## JOB'S REPLY TO ELIPHAZ, vi-vii.

*Argument.* The speech falls into three parts: the first, consisting of three strophes, is a soliloquy, the second, two strophes, is addressed to the three friends, and the third, the final three strophes, is addressed to God.

a) In the first part, Job excuses his opening outburst as the instinctive reaction of his nature to unbearable suffering (2-7); then he goes on to pray for death, lest his patience give way, and he be tempted to renounce God; for his own strength is exhausted, and he has received no assistance from others (8-14); for his friends, to whom he looked for solace, have played him false (15-20).

b) In the second part, he takes his friends to task for their heartlessness; instead of helping him to bear his sorrow, they insinuate that he has brought on his suffering by sin, and that his violent language reflects a spirit of rebellion against God (21-27). He solemnly asserts that he is still innocent; but God, who assigns a definite lot to all men, has given him a life of sorrow (28-vii. 3).

c) In the third part, each strophe is an appeal to God for a respite from suffering before death. He is tortured night and day, his body is wasting away, his life is fast ebbing to a close, and there is no return from Sheol (7-10). He is not a monster to be assailed as an enemy; he is a frail mortal man, whose years of life are few (11-16). He is too insignificant to merit God's constant attention; he has not injured God by sin. But even if he sinned, let God pardon it before it is too late (17-24).

*Strophic arrangement* : 6 : 7 : 6.

vi. 1 And Job answered and said :

- 2 Oh that my anguish were but weighed,  
And my calamity laid in the balance together,
- 3 Then would it prove heavier than the sands of the sea,  
Therefore have my words been frenzied ;
- 4 For the arrows of the Almighty are within me,  
Whose venom my spirit drinketh up,  
The terrors of God have troubled me.
- 5 Doth the wild ass bray over grass ?  
Doth the ox low over its fodder ?
- 6 Is insipid food eaten without salt ?  
Or is there flavour in the white of egg ?
- 7 My soul refuseth to be quiet,  
It is agitated by the sickness of my flesh.

- 8 Oh would that my request might come,  
And that God would grant my hope :  
9 That God may deign to crush me,  
That He let loose His hand and cut me off !  
10 Then it would still be my consolation—  
And I would be steadfast in pain that spareth not—  
That I have not denied the words of the Holy One.  
11 What is my strength, that I should wait ?  
And what is mine end, that I should be patient ?  
12 Is my strength the strength of stones ?  
And is my flesh of bronze ?  
13 Because there was no helper with me,  
So hath prudence fled from me ;  
14 When his friend faileth him who is in despair,  
He forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.
- 15 My brethren are faithless as a torrent,  
As the bed of torrents that have passed away ;  
16 Which are turbid by reason of the ice,  
When the snow hideth itself upon them ;  
17 What time it groweth warm, they vanish away,  
When it is hot, they disappear from their place.  
18 Caravans turn aside their ways,  
They come up through a waste, and are ready to  
perish ;  
19 The caravans of Tema look,  
The companies of Saba have hope ;  
20 They are disappointed, although they were confident,  
They come thither, and are confounded.
- 22 Did I say : ‘ Give to me,’  
Or ‘ offer a bribe for me out of your substance,’  
23 Or ‘ deliver me out of the hand of the adversary,’  
Or ‘ out of the hand of tyrants redeem me,’  
[21 That now ye are become heartless,  
Ye see a terror, and are afraid ?]  
24 Teach me, and I will hold my peace,  
And let me know wherein I have erred ;

- 25 How pleasant are words of uprightness !  
But what availeth reproof from you ?
- 26 Do ye reckon words as worthy of reproof ?  
And the sayings of a desperate man as  
passion ?
- 27 Nay, ye would cast lots upon the orphan,  
Ye would bargain about your friend !
- 28 But now, be pleased to look at me,  
Surely, I will not lie to your face ;
- 29 Turn ye now, let there be no wrong,  
Yea, turn, my justice is still in me.
- 30 Is there error in my tongue ?  
Cannot my palate discern falsehood ?
- vii. 1 Hath not man a period of service on earth ?  
And are not his days like the days of a  
hireling ?
- 2 Like a slave who is eager for the shade,  
And like a hireling who looketh for his wages,
- 3 So have I been allotted months of woe,  
And nights of trouble have been appointed to  
me.
- 4 If I lie down, I say : ' When will it be [day] ? '  
If I rise : ' When will it be evening ? '  
And I am filled with agony till the twilight ;
- 5 My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust,  
My skin breaketh up, and melteth away ;
- 6 My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,  
And are come to an end without hope ;
- 7 Oh remember that my life is but a breath,  
Mine eyes shall not see happiness again ;
- 8 The eyes of him that seeth me shall not  
behold me,  
Thine eyes shall look for me, and I shall not be ;
- 9 As the cloud cometh to an end and vanisheth,  
So he that goeth down to Sheol shall not  
come up ;
- 10 He shall return no more to his house,  
And his place shall know him no more.

- 11 I also will not refrain my mouth,  
    I will speak in the anguish of my spirit,  
    I will complain in the sorrow of my soul :  
12 Am I a Sea, or a Dragon,  
    That Thou settest a watch on me ?  
13 If I say : ' My couch will give me relief,  
    My bed will ease my complaint,'  
14 Then thou scarest me with dreams,  
    And terrifiest me with visions,  
15 So that my soul doth prefer strangling,  
    Death rather than my bones ;  
16 When I have pined away, I shall not come to life for  
    ever,  
    Let me alone, for my days are but a breath.
- 17 What is man, that Thou shouldst magnify him ?  
    Or that Thou shouldst regard him ?  
18 That Thou shouldst visit him every morning ?  
    Test him at every moment ?  
19 How long till Thou look away from me ?  
    And let me alone till I swallow down my spittle ?  
20 If I sinned, what could I do to Thee,  
    Thou watcher of men ?  
    Why hast Thou set me as a mark for Thee,  
    So that I am a burden to Thee ?  
21 And why dost Thou not take away my sin ?  
    And remit mine iniquity ?  
    For presently I shall lie down in the dust,  
    And Thou wilt seek me, but I shall not be.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

vi. 4c. 1. יַעֲרֹנִי ? (*cf.* G.). MT יַעֲרֹנִי. 7a. 1. לְרָגֹעַ.  
 (G.) MT לְרָגֹעַ. 7b. 1. הִמָּה בְּרֹי לְחִמִּי. MT לְחִמִּי. הִמָּה בְּרֹי לְחִמִּי.  
 For the verb in this sense *cf.* Ps. xlii. 6, 12; xliii. 5; Jer.  
 xxxi. 20; Cant. v. 4; Is. xvi. 11; Jer. iv. 17; xlviii. 36:  
 For לָחַם = body, flesh (or entrails) *cf.* xx. 23; Soph. i. 17.  
 12b-13a. 1. נָחִישָׁה הוּא : מֵאֵין. MT נָחִישָׁה : הָאֵם אֵין. 14a. 1.  
 17a. 1. צָרַב וְ (צ = יז). לָמָס . . . חָסַר. MT לָמָס . . . חָסַר.  
*Cf.* xii. 21, מוֹיָח for מִצָּח. MT יוֹרְבוּ. 18a. 1. יִלְפָּתוּ (*cf.*  
 Targ.). MT יִלְפָּתוּ. 20a. 1. בָּטָחוּ (Syr. Targ.). MT בָּטָח.  
 21. transp. post 23. 21a. 1. לֹא־בָּזָר (G. *cf.* xxx. 21). MT לֹא.  
 25a. 1. גִּמְלָצוּ (1 MS. Targ.). MT גִּמְרָצוּ. vii. 4a. Insert  
 יוֹם (G.) 4b. 1. מָתִי (G.). MT וּמִדֶּד. 5b. 1. וַיִּמָּאס  
 (= וַיִּמָּס, Targ. Syr.). MT וַיִּמָּאס. 16a. 1. מִפְּתִי (*cf.* 5b).  
 MT מִפְּתִי.



## COMMENTARY.

2-7. My suffering is unbearable. The violence of my language is due to my excessive suffering, of which God is the cause (2-4); as hungry animals cry out for food, or as a man has a distaste for unpalatable things, so my tortured body forces me to cry out in agony (5-7).

2. The masc. sing. verb (agreeing with 'anguish') proves that 'anguish' and 'calamity' are not two different things to be weighed against each other. If his anguish (or the calamity which caused it) were weighed, it would be found infinitely heavy. *Sands of the sea*, usually symbolises what is immeasurable (Gen. xxii. 17; xxiii. 13); but in Prov. xxvii. 3, it is used as here to symbolise something immeasurably heavy: 'A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty, but a fool's vexation is heavier than both.' *My words*, i.e. in his opening speech (iii.).

4. God is the author of his woes. *Arrows*. Job uses the same figure frequently: he is God's target (vii. 21), God musters His host against him (x. 17), His missiles fall about him, and pierce him (xvi. 13). *Trouble me*. The Hebrew verb is 'arrayed (against me)'. But most critics, following the Greek, transpose two letters and read the verb 'trouble.' The verb 'array' does not govern the accusative of the object *against which*, but takes the preposition 'against.'

5. The braying of the wild ass, or the lowing of the ox when hungry, is an instinctive natural impulse over which the animal has no control.

6. Similarly, man has a natural repugnance to insipid food. *White of egg*. This is the more probable meaning of the expression. Some critics, however, think that a plant is referred to, and translate 'juice of purslain,' a slimy substance formed of the decaying flowers of the plant (*cf.* Syriac).

7. This verse is obscure, and probably corrupt. Lit. 'My soul refuseth to touch, they are the sickness of my bread.' This forms a very weak climax to the strophe. We should expect Job to apply the argument of the previous verses to his own case. This is precisely what we have in the Greek text of 7a: 'My soul refuseth to be quiet,' which differs only in one letter. For the second clause, Budde, following a suggestion of Wright, reads 'It loatheth the sickness of my food.' Dhorme, with additional changes, 'my heart hath had loathing for my food.' No such drastic changes are needed. By pointing the first word ('they') differently we get the verb 'to be agitated,' which is frequently used in describing emotion (*cf.* with 'soul' as subject, Ps. xlii. 6, 12; xliii. 5; lv. 18; lxxvii. 4; with 'heart' as subject, Jer. iv. 19; xlviii. 36; with 'bowels' as subject, Jer. xxxi. 20; Cant. v. 4; Is. xvi. 11). *My flesh*. The word has this meaning in Soph. i. 17, and probably in Job xx. 23. Job explains that his violent language was beyond his control; it was the instinctive reaction to his terrible suffering.

8-14. Death is preferable to life, for hitherto he has not disowned God, and there is danger of his doing so if his agony is prolonged (8-10); for his own strength is spent, and he has received no aid from others (11-14).

8. As in his opening speech (iii) Job longs for death to relieve him from his misery. Let God strike him with the death-blow, and not let him linger on in agony.

10. In verse 14 he states that the sufferer abandoned by his friends 'forsakes the fear of the Almighty.' This is what Job fears. He has been steadfast hitherto, but his endurance is near the breaking point. If he died at once he would have the consolation of not having abandoned his piety (*cf.* ii. 10). That thought would make him rejoice even in his death-agony. *Denied the words.* The 'words' are the commands of God, which Job has scrupulously obeyed all his life. 'Deny' here means 'disown' or 'reject,' as in viii. 18.

11-12. If his body were as enduring as stones or bronze, or if he had hope of recovery, he could endure his suffering with patience.

13. It was because he was left to his own resources—without aid from others—that he lost restraint in his opening speech; if the same conditions continue he may even fall away from God altogether.

14. For the support and encouragement of his friends sustain a man's courage in adversity. On the contrary, when his friends fail him, he may lose patience, and give way to sin, 'forsake the fear of the Almighty.' This verse as it stands is probably corrupt. Dhorme, unable to fit it into the context at all, regards it as a gloss. It suffices to change one letter to obtain the text translated above. See critical note.

15-20. My friends have played me false. They are like a dried up torrent which disappoints the thirsty traveller.

15. *As a torrent.* In the rainy season the valley is filled with a raging flood, but in summer, when its waters are most needed by the thirsty traveller, it is dried up. *Cf.* 'Wilt thou be to me as a deceitful brook, as waters that fail?' (Jer. xv. 18).

16. *Ice . . . snow.* The waters are swollen by the melting ice and snow from the mountains.

18. *Caravans.* The word may also be translated 'paths': 'the paths of their (i.e. the torrents') ways wind about, they go up into the void and perish,' i.e. the turbulent river becomes a mere trickle winding its way among the stones of the river-bed, until, eventually, it vanishes altogether. This view of the text (accepted by Budde) is now generally abandoned. The waters have already disappeared according to v. 17, and commentators generally take the word in the same sense as in 19 = 'caravans.' *Waste* here as in xii. 24; Deut. xxxii. 10; Is. xlv. 18; Ps. cvii. 40, means the uninhabited wilderness. *Ready to perish.* The context shows that this is the meaning of the verb here. *Cf.* Joüon, 113, d.

19. Their hope returns when they see before them the valley which once contained abundant water. *Tema* and *Saba* are two Arab tribes (*cf.* i. 15).

20. But when they arrive at the river-bed, their hopes are dashed to the ground.

21-27. I begged no favours of you; I looked for sympathy, but you treat me with cruelty. *Cf.* xvi. 2ff; xix. 2ff.

21. Job now turns to address his three friends. The first clause of the verse is untranslatable as it stands, and nearly all modern critics follow Houbigant and make two corrections: 'So have ye now become to me.' So interpreted, the verse forms the conclusion to the comparison of the friends to a dried up river-bed. But this is open to two objections: a) In this verse the friends are addressed, as in 22-27, whereas in the previous strophe they were spoken of in the third person. It follows that it is not the conclusion of the strophe, but belongs to the following; b) there is no connection between 21a and 21b; for the latter has no allusion to the comparison. The Greek suggests that the final word 'not' is a mistake for or an abbreviation of the word 'cruel,' which suits the theme of the rest of the strophe. But the verse is probably out of place. If it is placed after 23, 'ye see a terror' is explained by the mention of 'adversary' and 'tyrant' in 23: Have I asked you to face a formidable adversary that ye are afraid?

22. If Job had asked them for money, to be used as a bribe on his behalf, it might account for their heartlessness; they might think such a sacrifice too great.

23. Or if he had asked them to do battle with a formidable adversary, it might account for their fear. *Deliver . . . ransom*, not necessarily with money, but by the display of superior force. *Cf.* 'I will deliver thee from the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee from the hand of tyrants' (Jer. xv. 21).

24. They insinuate that he has deserved his sufferings by his sins. Let them point out specific instances. *Erred*, i.e. morally, not intellectually.

25. Such a reproof would be gladly received by Job. *Words of uprightness*, a sincere rebuke, or a rebuke which reminds a sinner of his obligation to repent (xxxiii. 23). *How pleasant*. The usual meaning of the word is 'difficult or severe,' but this is unsuitable here. Some regard it as an unusual form of the word 'sweet,' others as a scribal error for the same word.

26. But instead of pointing out his sins, they rebuke him for his language. Eliphaz (v. 1-5) hinted that Job's words showed a spirit of rebellion against God. Job protests against this suggestion. *Passion*, as in xv. 13, has reference to resentment against God, the equivalent of 'vexation' in v. 2. The parallelism shows that 'passion' and 'worthy of reproof' are both the complement of the verb 'reckon.' As Job has already explained (5-7), his words should not be interpreted as expressing resentment against God.

27. Their heartlessness is such that they would oppress the

orphan, or sell their friend into slavery. *Cast lots*, i.e. to decide who was to have him as a slave (cf. Ps. xxii, 19). *Bargain about*, i.e. instead of paying a bribe on his behalf (22) or redeeming him from the adversary (23), they would sell him into slavery.

28-vii. 3. I solemnly assert my innocence; if I suffer, it is because God, who assigns each man's lot in life, has given me a life of misery.

28. Eliphaz' assumption that he must have sinned is completely unfounded. He looks them in the face, and solemnly asserts his innocence. Will they not accept the word of their old friend?

29. Let them not wrong him by false accusation. Cf. his protest against their calumnies in xvi. and xix. *Turn*, i.e. change your opinion. *Still in me*. The text has 'in it,' but the first person is more natural.

30. Or do they think he cannot discern truth from falsehood? The mind discriminates truth from falsehood, just as the taste can discern wholesome from unwholesome food. Cf. xii. 11; xxxiv. 3. Job is conscious that what he has just said is but the simple truth.

vii. 1. His misfortunes are due, not to his sins, but to the arbitrary will of God. Man's life is compared a) to a period of bondage or military service, and b) to the day of a hireling. In each case, the point of comparison is the same: God has assigned to each man a definite life-span, and He has also determined man's lot in life, whether happiness or misery. A *hireling* is different from a slave; he is hired for the day, and given a definite task (cf. Matt. xx. 12).

2. In Job's case, the lot assigned by God is one of misery. As a hireling toils through the heat of the day at his irksome labours, and longs for the evening when he can rest, so Job longs for death as relief from his misery. *His wages*. The hireling received his wages at the end of his day's work (Deut. xxiv. 15; Matt. xx. 8).

3. *Months of emptiness*, i.e. of disappointment. He mentions 'months,' to contrast with the 'day' of the hireling. His term is for months, not for a day; and even at night, unlike the hireling, he has no respite.

4-10. First appeal to God to pity his misery. Day and night he suffers agony; his body is covered with sores, and life is fast ebbing away. At death all hope of happiness vanishes, for there is no returning from Sheol.

4. The Hebrew has 'When I lie down, I say: When shall I rise? But evening is long (lit. is measured), and I am full of tossings until twilight.' The text is abnormal in some respects, e.g. the use of 'evening' for 'night,' and of 'is measured' for 'is prolonged.' In the opinion of the majority of critics, the Greek has preserved the correct reading. It inserts 'day' in 4a, and reads 'when?' for 'is measured' in 4b. Cf. 'In the

morning thou shalt say : Would it were evening ! And at even thou shalt say : Would it were morning !' (Deut. xxviii. 67). *Agony*. The word is used only here. The root means 'to wander,' hence, probably, 'tossings to and fro,' 'agony.'

5. His body is covered with foul matter from his sores, which adheres to dust from the ash-heap where he lies. Within this foul coating his flesh is ever breaking out into fresh sores. *Breaketh up*. The Hebrew word usually means 'shrink,' but in several passages (Is. li. 15 ; Jer. xxxi. 35 ; Job xxvi. 12) it certainly means 'cleave asunder,' and this is the meaning required here. *Melteth away*. Cf. Ps. lviii. 8. With the whole description compare xix. 20, 27 ; xxx. 26-31.

6. *Like a weaver's shuttle*, cf. 'I have rolled up like a weaver my life, he will cut me off from the thrum' (Is. xxxviii. 12). Elsewhere (ix. 25), he compares the passing of life to a courier, to skiffs of reed, and to an eagle swooping on its prey. *Without hope*. Dhorme suggests that the word means 'thread', here : 'they have come to an end for lack of thread.' But as 'days' is subject, this would give the unnatural statement 'they (my days) have come to an end for lack of thread (days.)' The parallel passage ix. 25, which has 'they see no good' instead of 'without hope,' supports the usual interpretation.

7. When death comes, hope of happiness is at an end. *A breath*, something transient (cf. Ps. lxxviii. 39 ; Is. xli. 29).

9. The morning cloud, which disappears as the day advances, is an apt symbol for something evanescent (cf. Os. xiii. 3). There is no returning from Sheol, cf. x. 21 ; xiv. 7-22 ; xvi. 22.

10. Cf. viii. 18 ; xx. 9 ; Ps. ciii. 16. His *house* and *place* are to be taken literally, not as equivalent to 'family' and 'kinsfolk' (cf. Peters), as the parallel passages prove.

11-16. Job's second appeal. Why does God persecute him thus by day and by night, so that he longs for death ? (11-15). Life is short, and when he has passed away he will not return, therefore he begs for relief before it is too late (16).

11. As he contemplates the gloomy prospect of Sheol in the near future, he ventures to reproach God for making him suffer without cause. *I also*, 'I on my side,' or 'I therefore.' This verse is repeated substantially in x. 1, where it introduces a similar outburst.

12 *Sea . . . Dragon*. The 'Sea' is the abyss of waters or Chaos, which God conquered when he began the work of Creation. This conquest of Chaos, and the control of the turbulent sea within due bounds, is often referred to when the writer wishes to emphasise the omnipotence of God (xxvi. 8. 12 ; xxxviii. 8 ; cf. Ps. xciii. 3-4 ; civ. 7 ; Jer. v. 22 ; Ecclus. xliii. 23). The *Dragon* (Tannin) like Leviathan and Rahab was a sea-monster, and symbolises the unruly powers of Chaos overthrown by God. At the creation God overthrew the Dragon, and confined the Sea in a prison with doors and bars (xxxviii. 10). With bitter irony Job asks whether he himself is regarded as an equally formidable foe, deserving the same constant vigilance.

13-14. Even at night I have no rest. Cf. xxx. 17.

15. *My bones*, i.e. my body. My soul prefers death to union with my pain-racked body. Some critics by a slight change read 'my pains.' But no change is necessary.

16. As in the previous strophe (9-10), he emphasises the fact that all hope of happiness ceases with death. *When I have pined away*. The perfect tense must be taken as equivalent to a concessive or temporal clause (cf. Joüon, 167, a, 1). The clause is usually translated 'I pine away, I shall not live for ever.' But here, as in xiv. 14, the verb 'live' means not 'continue to live' but 'come back to life.' There is no returning from Sheol; if I am to enjoy an interval of happiness, it must come before death.

17-24. Job's third appeal. He is too insignificant to merit God's attention. Even if he sinned, he could not harm God, so there is no need for this vigilance. Let God overlook any such trivial faults, and let him enjoy a short respite before death.

17. We have similar language in Ps. viii. 5, but with a very different meaning. The Psalmist asks why God has been so condescending as to make man lord of creation; Job asks why He thinks it necessary to watch man's every movement, in order to punish the slightest fault.

18. Cf. xiii. 7. This verse likewise parodies Psalm viii. In the latter, 'visit' means 'visit with favour,' here, 'visit with chastisement.'

19. Cf. 'Who will not suffer me to take breath' (ix. 18). God will not relax His vigilance even for one brief moment.

20. But there is no need for this vigilance; for, even if he sinned, he could not injure God. The statement in 20a is taken up and refuted by Elihu in xxxv. 2ff. *A mark for Thee*, i.e. a target at which God shoots His arrows (cf. xvi. 12-14). *A burden to Thee*. The Hebrew has 'to me'; but Jewish tradition says that this is one of the cases in which the text has been altered deliberately for dogmatic reasons. Peters claims that the word means 'target,' and not 'burden' here; but his argument is not convincing.

21. Since God has not been injured by Job's sin, He should rather take no notice of it, and restore his happiness. *Thou wilt look for me*. God's present mood will change, but then it will be too late.

## BILDAD'S FIRST SPEECH, viii.

*Argument.* Bildad's speech is a defence of the justice of God in His treatment of Job and his family. His children were sinners, and have met with the doom of sinners (2-4) ; he himself, being a just man, has hope of recovery through repentance (5-7). The fate of his children is in accordance with the teaching of tradition (8-10), namely, that the wicked man meets with premature death (11-13), that his prosperity is insecure, and will utterly vanish (14-15, 18), and that with him will perish his whole family (16-19). In accordance with this law of divine justice, Job will again enjoy happiness, while the wicked will perish (20-22).

*Strophic arrangement :* 3 : 3 : 3.

viii. 1 And Bildad the Shuhite answered and said :

2 How long wilt thou utter such things ?

And the words of thy mouth be like a mighty  
wind ?

3 Doth God pervert judgment ?

And doth the Almighty pervert justice ?

4 If thy children sinned against Him,

He hath delivered them into the power of their  
transgression.

5 If thou wilt have recourse to God,

And make supplication to the Almighty,

6 If thou art pure and upright,

Then will He awake for thee,  
And restore the abode of thy justice ;

7 And thy former state will be accounted small,

And thy latter state will be exceeding great.

8 For inquire of the former generation,

And give heed to the lore of their fathers—

9 For we are of yesterday, and have no knowledge,

For a shadow are our days upon the earth—

10 Will they not teach thee, and say to thee,

And from their heart utter words ?

- 11 " Can the papyrus grow without mire ?  
     Can the sedge flourish without water ?  
 12 While still tender, without being plucked,  
     Before all grass it withereth ;  
 13 Such is the fate of all that forget God,  
     And so doth the hope of the impious perish.
- 14 For his trust is but gossamer (?),  
     And his confidence a spider's web ;  
 15 He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand,  
     He shall lay hold of it, but it shall not endure ;  
 [18 When He hath destroyed him from his place,  
     It will disown him : ' I have not seen thee'.]
- 16 He is moist before the sun,  
     And over his garden his shoots come forth ;  
 17 About a heap his roots are entwined,  
     Amidst a house of stones he liveth ;  
 19 Behold, he is parched by the sun,  
     And from the ground another springeth up."
- 20 Behold, God doth not reject the upright,  
     Nor doth He take the hand of evil-doers ;  
 21 Again shall thy mouth be filled with laughter,  
     And thy lips with rejoicing ;  
 22 They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame,  
     And the tent of the wicked shall be no more.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

viii. 3a. 1. יַעֲנֶה (*cf.* G., Vulg., Targ.). M T יַעֲנֶה (*cf.* 3b). 8b. 1. יְבוֹנֵן (Duhm). M T יְבוֹנֵן. 13a. 1. אֶחָרִית (G.). M T אֶרְחֹת. 17b. 1. בְּבֵית. M T בֵּית. 1. יְחֹזֵן (= יֶאֱחֹזֵן) or יְחִיָּה (G.). M T יְחִיָּה. 18. Transp. post 15. 19a. 1. חֲרָךְ (*cf.* Aram. = to parch), or חֲפֶךְ (*cf.* xxiv. 24) מִשְׁשֵׁשׁ. M T מִשְׁשֵׁשׁ דָּרְכוּ. 21a. 1. עַד יִמְלֹא (Syr. Vulg.). M T עַד יִמְלֹא.



## COMMENTARY.

2-4. God is just, and your children have but received the due reward for their sins.

2. *A mighty wind*, like a storm, passionate; with, perhaps, an underlying suggestion that his words are empty rhetoric (*cf.* xvi. 3).

3. To Bildad, as to Elihu (xxxiv. 10, 12), it is inconceivable that God should act unjustly. He interprets Job's speech (especially vii. 3 and 11-16) as implying that God had treated him unjustly.

4. The sudden destruction of Job's family can mean nothing in Bildad's eyes but the due punishment of their crimes. *If* here is almost equivalent to 'because' as in xiv. 5 (*cf.* Jouon, 166, p).

5-7. Job himself, if he is really innocent, can recover his happiness by repentance.

5. Bildad, like Eliphaz, assumes that Job is pure and upright, and that his sufferings are due to sins of which he is not conscious; and, like Eliphaz, he counsels appeal to the mercy of God (*cf.* v. 6-11). It is therefore a mistake to regard 6a as a gloss, as Dhorme does. It corresponds to iv. 6 in Eliphaz's speech. As in verse 4, 'if' is almost equivalent to 'because.'

6. *Abode of thy justice*, the abode which was thine formerly, as the reward of thy piety. *Abode*, as in v. 3, 24 includes his property.

7. *Cf.* v. 23-26 and xlii. 12: 'God blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning.'

8-10. The tradition of the ancients.

8. Bildad claims the support of tradition, as Eliphaz claimed the authority of divine revelation (iv. 12ff). His teaching goes back to his father's time (the former generation), but the men of that time had received it from their fathers. In xv. 17-20, Eliphaz similarly claims for his side a tradition uncontaminated by foreign influence. *The lore*, lit. 'the searching out,' what they had acquired by diligent research (*cf.* v. 27).

9. The reference is apparently to the great ages of the patriarchs. As old age brings wisdom (xii. 12), who could be wiser than the patriarchs? A short life like ours does not give time for the acquisition of wisdom. *A shadow*, brief, transient (*cf.* xiv. 1).

11-13. The wicked man dies prematurely, like the papyrus deprived of water.

11. *The papyrus* and the *sedge* or reed need abundant moisture, otherwise they wither and die.

12. If the water fail while it is still immature, it withers even

sooner than less luxuriant herbage. *Without being plucked.* The mere absence of water makes it wither and die.

13. Similarly, the wicked perish prematurely. *Cf.* xv. 32ff; xx. 11; xxxiv. 20; xxxvi. 4. *Fate.* So Greek. Heb. has 'paths.'

14-15, 18. For his prosperity will not endure; his name will be forgotten even in the lands over which he ruled.

14. *Cf.* 'Let him not trust in his greatness' (xv. 31, *cf.* xx. 17). His prosperity, which seems stable and enduring, is as unsubstantial as gossamer or a spider's web. *Gossamer.* The Hebrew word occurs nowhere else. It is usually connected with the Arabic root *qatta* = 'to cut,' hence 'his confidence will be cut off.' Saadia, apparently guided by the parallelism, translated 'gossamer,' which gives a good parallel to 'spider's web,' and is accepted by Bickell, Budde, Peters, and others. Dhorme 'timidly' suggests 'shepherd's scrip' (*cf.* 1 Sam. xvii. 40). We have a similar figure in xxvii. 18: 'He hath built his house like a moth, and like a booth which a watchman maketh.'

15. *His house.* Here, as in 1 K. xiii. 8 (*cf.* xxvii. 18) means property, wealth, including both his possessions and his family. *Shall not endure,* *cf.* xv. 29; xx. 21.

18. His possessions will pass into other hands, and his name will be forgotten in the place he once owned. *Cf.* xv. 29b; xviii. 17; xx. 9.

The parallel passages indicate that this verse should be connected with 15-16; in its present context it interrupts the connection between 17 and 19.

16-19. He himself will perish, and he will leave no posterity.

16. Premature death, poverty, and lack of posterity to keep his name alive among his fellow-men all form part of the traditional teaching on the fate of the wicked (*cf.* xv. 21-35; xviii. 5-21; xx. 5-29; xxvii. 13-23). The third point forms the subject of this strophe.

He is like a plant growing on stony ground; it grows luxuriantly until the sun gets hot; then it withers and dies. Compare the figure used by Eliphaz in xv. 30-33, and by Bildad in xviii. 16-19. *Over his garden,* i.e. above the surface of the garden-bed. At this stage the plant represents the wicked man in the days of his prosperity.

17. But his root is on stony ground. *Cf.* 'the plant of the violent hath no shoots, because the root of the impious is on a peak of rock' (Ecclus. xl. 15; *cf.* Matt xiii. 8) *He liveth.* Hebrew has 'he beholdeth' 'a house of stones.' This is accepted by Peters, who takes the verb in the sense of 'he feels.' But most critics regard the word as corrupt. Some emend to 'he graspeth' or 'they (the roots) grasp.' The Greek has 'he lives,' which is accepted by Dhorme. This is probably correct; but the preposition must not be translated 'in' ('to live in,' 'dwell' is a different verb), but 'among' (as Lam. iv. 20), or 'by means of.'

The 'stones' are those of the 'heap' about which the roots are entwined. Contrast the description of Job in his prosperity: 'my root is spread out to the waters' (xxx. 19).

19. The result is that, when the sun grows warm, the plant withers and dies for want of moisture. *He is parched by the sun.* The Hebrew has 'that is the joy of his way,' i.e. thus ends his short-lived joy. But we have not been told that it has ended; the reference to the withering of the plant is wanting. Besides, the figure of the plant is abandoned, only to be resumed in 19b. I suggest that the word 'joy' is a corruption of the word for 'sun' (cf. a corruption of the same word in xxxvi. 30), and 'way' of the original verb. See critical note. *Another springeth up*, i.e. there will be none of his name surviving.

20-22. Bildad's conclusion from the teaching of the ancients.

20. The general principle of retribution (cf. iv. 7): He will not reject the innocent, though He may send them chastisement for minor faults; He will not save the wicked from utter ruin. Cf. xxxvi. 5-7.

21. The application of the principle to Job. Cf. v. 17-27. *Shall be filled.* Hebrew has the active 'He will fill'; but the next verse is in favour of the passive (as Syr. and Vulg.).

22. Job's enemies, who rejoiced in his downfall, will be confounded when he is restored to happiness.

## JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD, ix.-x.

*Argument.* The Speech consists of two parts, of five strophes each. The first is a discussion of Eliphaz's question 'Can a man be just before God?' (iv. 17); the second, an address to God in which Job complains of the treatment he has received.

a) Job agrees with Eliphaz, that no man can be just before God, but not for the same reason. His adversary is armed with invincible powers (2-7), for he is no other than the Creator of the universe, who overthrew the powers of Chaos of old (8-13). How then can a mere man hope to meet Him in judgment? (14-19). Innocent or guilty, he would lose his case; it follows that God's treatment of a man does not depend on his merits or demerits (20-24). It is futile to hold out a prospect of future happiness; for God has determined to afflict him, notwithstanding his innocence (25-31).

b) If only he could meet God on equal terms! But even though this is impossible, he will risk his life and speak on his own behalf (32-x. 1). He is being afflicted, though he is innocent (2-7); he, one of God's creatures on whom so much care has been lavished, is being wantonly destroyed (8-12); for God has decreed that, whether virtuous or wicked, misfortune was to be his lot (13-17). It were better to have died in the womb; but since God has chosen to give him a few years of life, let Him grant him a brief respite from suffering, before he goes to the eternal gloom of Sheol (18-22).

*Strophic arrangement* : 6 : 6 : 6.

ix. 1 And Job answered and said :

- 2 Verily, I know that it is so,  
And how can a man be just before God ?
- 3 Should he wish to contend with Him,  
He could not answer Him one thing in a  
thousand ;
- 4 Wise in heart, and mighty in strength,  
Who hath defied Him, and remained unscathed ?
- 5 Who removeth mountains, and they knew not  
Whom He overthrew in His wrath ;
- 6 Who shaketh the earth out of its place,  
And the pillars thereof tremble ;
- 7 Who commandeth the sun, and it shineth not,  
And sealeth up the stars.

- 8 Who alone stretched out the heavens,  
And trod upon the waves of the sea ;  
9 Who made the Bear, and Orion,  
The Pleiades, and the Chambers of the South ;  
10 Who doth great things, beyond computing,  
Marvellous things, beyond reckoning ;  
11 Behold, He passeth by me, and I see Him not,  
He glideth past, and I perceive Him not ;  
12 Behold, He seizeth, and who can turn Him back ?  
Who shall say to Him : What dost Thou ?  
13 Even a god could not turn back His wrath,  
The helpers of Rahab did bow beneath Him.  
14 How much less shall I answer Him,  
And choose my words against Him ?  
15 Even though I am in the right, I could not answer,  
I should make supplication to my adversary ;  
16 If I should cite, and He should answer,  
I believe not that He would hearken to my words ;  
17 He who crusheth me for a trifle,  
And multiplieth my wounds without cause ;  
18 Who will not suffer me to take breath,  
And filleth me with sorrow ;  
19 If it be question of strength—behold the Mighty  
One !  
If of judgment—who will arraign Him ?  
20 Were I in the right, my own mouth would condemn  
me,  
Were I innocent, it would prove me perverse ;  
21 My innocence I myself would not know,  
I myself would cast away my life ;  
[29 It is I that should be found in the wrong,  
Why should I labour in vain ?]  
22 It were all one, therefore I say :  
The innocent and the wicked He destroyeth ;  
23 If the scourge should slay suddenly,  
He laugheth at the trial of the innocent ;  
24 The land is given into the hands of the wicked,  
He covereth the faces of the judges thereof ;  
If not He, who then ?

- 25 My days are swifter than a courier,  
     They flee away, they see no happiness ;  
 26 They glide by like skiffs of reed,  
     Like an eagle swooping on its prey ;  
 27 If I said : ' I will forget my complaint,  
     I will change my countenance, and be cheerful,'  
 28 I dread all my pains,  
     I know that Thou wilt not hold me innocent ;  
 30 If I should wash myself with snow-water,  
     And cleanse my hands with lye,  
 31 Then wouldst Thou plunge me in filth,  
     So that my garments would abhor me.  
 32 Since He is not a man as I am, that I should  
     answer Him,  
     That we should come together to judgment,  
 33 There is no arbiter between us,  
     Who might lay his hand upon us both,  
 34 Let Him take away His rod from me,  
     And let not His terror affright me ;  
 35 . . . . .  
     I shall speak, and not fear Him.  
     Though not thus doth He argue with me,  
 x. 1 I myself make naught of my life,  
     I will give free course to my complaint,  
     I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.  
 2 I will say to God : Do not condemn me !  
     Let me know wherewith Thou chargest me !  
     . . . . .  
 3c While Thou shinest on the counsel of the wicked ?  
 4 Hast Thou eyes of flesh ?  
     Seest Thou as man seeth ?  
 5 Are Thy days as the days of a mortal ?  
     And Thy years as the years of a man,  
 6 That Thou seekest after my iniquity,  
     And searchest after my sin,  
 7 Because Thou knowest that I am not wicked,  
     And there is none that can deliver out of Thy  
     hand ?

- [3 Is it pleasant to Thee to oppress,  
That Thou despisest the work of Thy hands ?]  
8 Thy hands have formed me, and fashioned me,  
And afterwards wilt Thou turn and destroy me ?  
9 Oh remember that Thou didst fashion me as with  
clay,  
And wilt Thou bring me to dust again ?  
10 Hast Thou not poured me out as milk ?  
And curdled me as cheese ?  
11 Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh,  
And knit me together with bones and sinews ;  
12 Life and favour Thou hast granted me,  
And Thy care hath preserved my spirit.  
13 And these things thou didst hide in Thy heart,  
I know that this was in Thy thought :  
14 If I should sin, Thou wouldst watch me,  
And from my fault Thou wouldst not acquit me ;  
15 If I should be wicked, woe is me,  
And were I innocent, I durst not hold up my head ;  
Filled with ignominy, and drunk with affliction,  
[17c A renewal of hard service is my lot ;]  
16 And Thou exaltest Thyself, like a lion Thou huntest  
me,  
And workest fresh marvels against me ;  
17 And Thou bringest new witnesses against me,  
And increasest Thy vexation against me.  
18 Why didst Thou bring me forth from the womb ?  
I should have died, and no eye had seen me ;  
19 I should be as though I had never been,  
Borne from the womb to the grave ;  
20 Are not the days of my life few ?  
Let me alone, that I may be cheerful for a while,  
21 Before I go, whence I shall not return,  
To a land of darkness and death-shade,  
22 A land whose gloom is like dense darkness,  
Death shade without order,  
Whose brightness is like dense darkness,  
[And seeth not the light of life.]

## CRITICAL NOTES.

ix. 9a. l. וְכִסִּיל (G. Syr. Vulg.). MT בְּסִילִן. 17a. l. בְּשַׁעֲרָה (Targ. Syr.). MT בְּשַׁעֲרָה. 19b. l. יוֹעִידֵנוּ (G. Syr.). MT יוֹעִידֵנִי. 21a. l. תָּמִי. MT תָּם. Connect נַפְשִׁי with 21b. 27a. l. אֶמְרָתִי (1 MS. G. Targ. Vulg.). MT אֶמְרִי. 29. Transp. post 21. 32a. l. לֹא ? MT לֹא. 33a. l. לֹא ? MT לֹא. 35b. l. נֹכַח (cf. xxiii. 7). MT אֲנוּכִי. x. 3a-b., transp. ante 8. 8b. l. אַחֲרֵי סִבָּתָה (G.). MT יַחַד סִבִּיב. 15c. l. וְרִוְיָה עָנִי. MT וְרִוְיָה עָנִי. 16a. l. תִּגְאָה (or בִּגְאָה), MT וַיִּגְאָה. 17c. Transp. post 15c. 20a. l. יָמֵי חֲלָדִי (G. Syr.). MT יָמֵי יַחַדְלִי. 22a. l. עֲפָתָה. MT עֲפָתָה. 22d. Greek adds  $\epsilon\upsilon\delta\epsilon\ \acute{o}\rho\alpha\nu\ \zeta\omega\eta\ \beta\rho\sigma\tau\omega\nu$  which represents an original וְלֹא תִרְאָה בְּאוֹר חַיִּים.



## COMMENTARY.

2-7. Man cannot be just before God; for his adversary is infinitely wise and powerful, having at His command all the forces of nature, such as volcano, earthquake and darkness (storm-clouds).

2. He begins by recalling the words of Eliphaz's nocturnal visitor (iv. 17). Job agrees that man cannot be just before God, not because man is essentially impure, but because he would be so obsessed by God's majesty that he would be unable to speak in his own defence, and God could always make him appear in the wrong.

3. *To contend* i.e. to engage in a legal process. No man can hope to win a suit against God. In 3-4, 14-15, he considers the position of man as defendant, in 16 that of man as complainant. *He could not answer*. Dhorme makes God the subject: He would refuse to present Himself to answer the charges of such a miserable adversary (cf. xxxiii. 13-14). But verse 14 (which resumes the argument interrupted by 4-15) proves that there is question of man's reply to God's charges. He would be powerless against the wisdom and power of God (4ff).

4. God is all-wise and all-powerful, and no man can withstand Him. *Defied*, lit. 'hardened' i.e. the neck (cf. Prov. xxix. 1; Deut. x. 16; 2 K. xvii. 14), hence 'was obstinate or defiant.' Job is alluding to Eliphaz's statement that resistance to God is futile (v. 1ff).

5. For He has command of all the forces of nature. *Removeth* i.e. apparently, by volcanic action. *They knew not*. The subject can hardly be the mountains. Syriac has the singular 'and He knoweth not' i.e. without effort. This is accepted by Bickell, Beer and Duhm. The plural may be indefinite: men know not, i.e. mysteriously (cf. xxxvi. 26; xxxvii. 5, where 'and we know not' is used somewhat similarly). But it is more probable that the subject is in the following clause. The upheaval came so suddenly that they who were destroyed by it were taken unawares. He is alluding to some event like the overthrow of Sodom.

6. The earthquake. Cf. Ps. xviii. 7. The earth is conceived as a house supported on pillars (cf. xxxviii. 4-6). Dhorme quotes an interesting passage from Seneca, which gives the same explanation of the earthquake: *Fortasse aliqua pars terrae velut columnis quibusdam ac pilis sustinetur, quibus vitiatas ac recedentibus tremit pondus impositum* (Nat. quaest. vi. 20).

7. Darkness. The darkness is that of the thunder-clouds from which God smites down His enemies. Cf. Ps. xviii. 8, 11-12; Joel ii. 10; iii. 15-16; Is. xiii. 10-13, where earthquake and darkness are associated as here.

8-12. For He is the Creator of the universe (8-10), He is intangible and irresistible (11-13).

8. The beginning of the new strophe is marked by the change

to a series of participles without the article. God would have at His command the forces of nature because He is their Creator. *Stretched out* i.e. like a tent (*cf.* Ps. civ. 2 ; Is. xl. 22 ; xlii. 5). *Trod upon*. As the whole context refers to the creation, this clause probably refers to the conquest of the Abyss, and the restriction of the sea to its prescribed limits.

9. He created the stars. *Cf.* Gen. i. 14-19. *Bear, Orion, Pleiades*. This is the more general view regarding the identification of the constellations represented by the Hebrew names. In the Versions there is considerable variety. Thus, Vulgate has for the first *Arcturus* here, but *Vesperum* in xxxviii. 32 ; for the second, *Oriona* here and Amos v. 8, *Arcturus* in xxxviii. 32 ; for the third, *Hyades* here, *Pleiades* in xxxviii. 31, and *Arcturus* in Amos v. 8. The particular group represented by the name 'Chambers of the South' is not known for certain.

10. The rest of the story of creation is summarised in this general statement. *Cf.* v. 9.

11. God is unseen by man ; His activity is mysterious, and therefore no man can defend himself against Him.

12. He is irresistible ; if He should wish to afflict a man by taking away his family and his property, as He has done in the case of Job, none can prevent Him.

13. Even powers far superior to man are no match for Him. *Even a god*. The Hebrew word *'elōah* is the usual one for God in the Dialogue, and it is generally taken in this sense here also : 'God will not turn back His anger.' But this does not account for the emphatic position of the word, and the connection with the parallel clause is not clear. As there is an allusion to the primitive creation-myth in 13b, it is likely that the same is true of 13a, and that the word means 'a god' rather than 'God.' It occurs in this sense in 2 Chr. xxxii. 15 ; Dan. xi. 37 (*cf.* Hab. i. 11 ; 2 K. xvii. 31 ; Job xii. 6). There is an allusion to Eliphaz's speech (iv. 18 ; v. 1ff) : Eliphaz asserted that the angels are not pure in His sight ; Job retorts : Even divine beings like Himself cannot resist Him (15), much less man (16).

*Helpers of Rahab*. There is manifestly a reference to a primitive creation-myth, in which Rahab represented the powers of Chaos, corresponding to the Tiamat of the Babylonian Creation-story. Tiamat's host was composed of eleven kinds of weird monsters under the leadership of Kingu, and they are actually called 'her helpers' in the Babylonian epic (*Enuma elish*, iv. 107). Rahab is mentioned again in xxvi. 15 (*cf.* Ps. lxxxix. 11 ; Is. li. 9). The God who triumphed over Rahab and her helpers cannot be overcome by man.

14-19. In a suit at law Job cannot hope to win against such an adversary. As defendant, he could not answer the charges brought against him ; as complainant, he could not compel his adversary to appear. God's attitude in such an event can be inferred from His present treatment of Job.

14. The figure throughout is that of a suit at law, and in this

verse and the following Job is supposing the case in which he is defendant and God complainant.

15. Even though entitled to a verdict in his favour, he would be compelled to let his case go by default, and beg for mercy. *My adversary*, the technical word for an opponent in a law-suit (*cf.* xxxiv. 6; Ps. cix. 31).

16. The two words 'cite' and 'answer' are used here in the strictly legal sense: if I were complainant and He defendant. Job now discusses the second phase of the question—his case against God. God would not condescend to take notice of his summons.

17-18. God's present treatment of him is an indication of His hostility. *For a trifle*. The text reads 'with a storm,' but the phrase 'crush with a storm' is improbable, and a slight change of pointing gives 'for a hair' i.e. a mere trifle, which is the reading of Targum and Syriac, and a good parallel to 'without cause.'

18. My sufferings are both unceasing and intense. *To take breath*, *cf.* vii. 19; xiv. 6.

19. Resistance is hopeless, for none can withstand His might, nor call Him to account for His action. This verse sums up the whole argument: 19a is a resume of verses 8-13, and 19b a resume of 14ff. *Arraign*, lit. 'appoint,' but here a technical term for summoning to court to answer a charge (*cf.* Jer. xlix. 19; 1, 44). The text has 'who will arraign *me*?' making God the speaker, but the third person (Gr. Syr.) is preferable.

20-24. In such a case, I should be found guilty, despite my innocence; which proves that God is not guided by a man's merits; He allows the innocent to suffer, while he grants success to the wicked.

20. *Cf.* 15. In the latter verse Job says that he would be afraid to defend himself in God's presence; he goes further, he would be so confused that he would declare himself guilty.

21. The Hebrew reads: 'I am innocent, I regard not my soul, I despise my life.' But the repetition of the first clause from 20, and the irregularity of the metre make the reading suspicious. The first defect can be remedied by reading 'my innocence,' the second by a different division of the words. The meaning is: he would be so confused that he would not know whether he was innocent or not, and would give up in despair. Verse 29 should probably be inserted here. See below.

22. *It were all one*, i.e. whether I defend myself or not, the issue would be the same; for God's action in my regard does not depend on my guilt or innocence. From his own case he now generalises, and reaches a conclusion directly contrary to the principle propounded by Eliphaz (iv. 7) and Bildad (viii. 20): His chastisements fall upon the innocent and the guilty alike. This he illustrates by two examples.

23. In time of general disaster the innocent suffer with the guilty, and God is indifferent to their fate. *Scourge* has reference to pestilence or flood, or any sudden disaster. This gives the answer to the question of Eliphaz: 'Who that was innocent ever perished?' (iv. 7).

24. God permits the wicked to prosper. Bildad asserted: 'God doth not take the hand of evil-doers' (viii. 20). Job replies: God makes them mighty in the land. Cf. xxii. 8, where Eliphaz quotes Job as having made a statement of this kind. According to the traditional view 'the just shall inherit the land' (Ps. xxxvii. 9, 11, 22, 29). *He covereth the faces*. The wicked oppressors are not punished because those entrusted with the administration of justice fail to take cognisance of their crimes. For this God is responsible; He 'covereth their faces,' i.e. makes them blind to the prevalence of oppression. *If not He*. Cf. xii. 7-12, where the absence of retribution is likewise attributed to God.

25-31. His life is fast ebbing away; but he has no hope of happiness, for God is determined to afflict him, notwithstanding his innocence.

25. Cf. vii. 6. *Courier*, a runner chosen to carry official messages with all possible despatch.

26. *Skiffs of reed*, boats made of papyrus, with a wooden keel, and capable of great speed because of their lightness (cf. Is. xviii. 2). *Ex ipso quidem papyro navigia texunt* (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xiii. 22).

27. This verse probably refers to the glowing promises made by Eliphaz (v. 17-27) and Bildad (viii. 7, 21). Job replies: If I fancy for a moment that I shall recover, my pains make me realise that there is no hope; for God has determined to make me suffer (cf. xvii. 10-16).

29. Duhm regards this verse as a prose gloss on verse 30. The first clause is the exact counterpart of xiii. 18: 'I know that I shall be justified,' i.e. in a fair trial. Here 'I should be found in the wrong,' because I cannot meet God on equal terms. In each case there is question of a legal action. This being so, the verse probably belongs to the preceding strophe where there is question of the issue of a trial. It fits admirably after verse 21.

30. Their promises of recovery and happiness are futile: for God has determined to make him suffer, and repentance is of no avail. *Washed with snow-water*. The reading varies between 'with snow' and 'with snow-water.' As neither has special cleansing properties, some critics read 'like snow' (cf. Is. i. 18; Ps. li. 7). But the parallel 'with lye' confirms the reading of the text. Snow-water may have been mentioned, not because of its special efficiency, but because of its abundance. But another possibility must be mentioned. In later Jewish literature there is evidence that the word meant 'soap' as well as 'snow' (cf. Peters, *ad loc.*). This would form a good parallel to 'with lye.'

31. Even then, after he had thoroughly purified himself by repentance, God would treat him as a monster of iniquity. *Filth*. The word usually means 'pit.' Many critics, on the basis of the Greek and Vulg., substitute a slightly different word meaning 'filth.' But it is doubtful if emendation is necessary; for the word means 'corruption' in xvii. 14.

32-x. 1. If only he could meet God on equal terms, with an arbiter to do justice to both, and unhindered by his suffering and by his awe of God's majesty! But even at the risk of his life he will present his case.

32. In a fair trial, before unprejudiced judges, Job is sure of a favourable verdict. But with God he is not dealing with an equal, nor is there a third party to act as arbiter.

33. *Put his hand*, i.e. to indicate that he exercises authority over both, and that his decision is to be accepted. Instead of the negative 'there is *not*,' the Greek has 'Oh would that.'

34. Since trial before an arbiter is impossible, let God at least refrain from employing against him all the resources of His omnipotence. *His rod*, the suffering which he now endures (cf. xxi. 9; xxxvii. 13). *His terror*, the sense of the divine majesty which would now prevent him from doing himself justice (14ff). Cf. 'Withdraw Thy hand from me, and let not Thy terror affright me' (xiii. 21).

35a. Then he would be able to speak freely in his own defence. As 35b is to be taken with the following (see below), it is probable that the parallel for this clause has been omitted by mistake. The original may have been something like: 'Then would I argue my case before him; I would speak and not fear Him.'

35b-x. 1a. Yet, even though he cannot contend with God on equal terms, he is prepared to risk his life in an effort to present his case. This interpretation of the passage is confirmed by comparison with xiii. 13-15. The Heb. of 35b reads: 'For not so *am I* with myself.' This is taken to mean that in himself he has no cause to fear. Peters, following a suggestion of Torczyner, holds that the pronoun was originally third person (i.e. God), but was changed for dogmatic reasons, and translates: 'For injustice (cf. Is. xvi. 6; Jer. xxiii. 10; Prov. xv. 7) He dealeth with me.' The chief reason for the obscurity of the verse is that it has been wrongly connected with the preceding. Verse 35a concludes the treatment of the hypothetical case of a trial with God on equal terms; he now deals with the actual facts. God will not deal with him on equal terms; yet, even so, and at the risk of his life, he will argue his case. Instead of the pronoun, *ānōki* it suffices to read *nōkah* 'He argueth with' (xxiii. 7). *Not thus* i.e. in the manner described in 33ff. *I myself make naught of life*, lit. 'my soul loatheth my life,' i.e. I am ready to risk my life. Cf. xiii. 14: 'I will take my life in my hand' in a precisely similar context. Cf. xxiii. 2-7.

x. 1b-c. *Against Him*. The Hebrew has 'against *me*,' which Dhorme interprets as meaning that Job is going to speak with

himself. But, in fact, the following verses are addressed to God. The Greek (against *Him*) is to be preferred.

2-7. Job's case against God. Why has He afflicted Job? Does He afflict the just and favour the wicked? Or is He fallible in His judgment like men, and so regards Job as one of the wicked? Or, because He knows that Job is not wicked (7a), does He take advantage of His might (7b), and seek out minor faults (6) like a human tyrant (5)?

In this and the following strophes, Job passes in review the various possible explanations of his sufferings, and finally (13-17) gives his own explanation.

2. *Condemn . . . chargest.* The terms are juridical. God has condemned him unheard, and without even stating the grounds of accusation.

3. Is He not a just God? Why does he make the just suffer, and the wicked prosper? Many modern critics (Bickell, Beer, Budde, Duhm, Gray) regard 3c as a gloss, on the ground that it does not form a good parallel to 3a-b. The want of connection is obvious. But if we compare the theme of this strophe with that of the following, we see that the present strophe deals with the absence of retribution, while the following treats of the incongruity of God's destroying His own work. Verse 3c, therefore, is perfectly appropriate here, and it is 3a-b that is the disturbing factor. It originally belonged to the following strophe, and its interpolation here led to the loss of the original parallel to 3c. It must have referred to the suffering of the just, e.g. 'Why dost Thou hide Thy face from the just?'

4. Or, if He is not unjust, is He fallible in His judgment like men, and so regards Job as one of the wicked? Cf. 'He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, nor decide after the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness shall he judge the poor' (Is. xi. 4).

5. Is He not eternal? That is, is He like a human tyrant, who seeks out and punishes the slightest faults, because He is supreme and answerable to none?

6. *My iniquity . . . sin.* Job distinguishes between 'wickedness' (7a) and 'sin.' The latter is due to ignorance or inadvertance; the former is deliberate violation of God's law. In the absence of serious crimes, is God seeking out minor faults? Elihu may be alluding to this passage when he quoted Job as saying: 'He findeth pretexts against me' (xxxiii. 10).

7. *Because.* The particle is usually translated 'although,' as in xvi, 17. But the more usual meaning 'because' is more appropriate. It is *because* God finds no serious crimes, that, according to Job, He seeks to discover minor faults to find an occasion for chastising Job. *None that can deliver.* God is omnipotent, and Job asks: Is he taking advantage of His might like a human tyrant?

8-12. Or is God by nature cruel, so that He delights in destroying even His own work?

3a-b. The introduction to this strophe is probably to be found in the ironical question which has become attached to the previous strophe (see above). It is not necessary to supply an object to 'oppress' (cf. Vulg.); the meaning is: Is *oppression* so pleasant to Thee that, in order to gratify Thy pleasure, Thou wilt even destroy Thy own work?

8. For Job is really God's own work. *Afterwards wilt Thou turn?* Hebrew has 'altogether round about'; but the Greek (translated above) is generally accepted as original. Metrically, the words belong to the second half of the verse.

9. Man's body has been formed of clay, as the earthen vessel is moulded by the potter (cf. Gen. ii. 7; Job xxxiii. 6; Jer. xviii. 4-6). The second part must be taken as a question like 8b, otherwise the clause would be merely a statement of the common lot of all men. What excites Job's wonder is that God has manifested such care in his formation, only to destroy him without reason.

10. Abandoning the figure of the potter, Job now describes the care lavished on him by God since the first moment of his conception. The foetus is conceived as first in a fluid state, then coagulated (10b), then it receives a covering of skin and flesh (11a), and a framework of bones and sinews (11b). Cf. Ps. cxxxix. 13-16; Wisd. vii. 2.

12. Finally God gave him life (at his birth), showed him favour (enriched him), and guarded him from danger. *Life and favour.* As the Hebrew is somewhat awkward (the verb being unusual with 'life' as object), some critics read 'grace and favour.' In Wisdom iv. 15 we find the same sequence (grace . . . favour . . . care). But the reference to his birth seems more natural.

13-17. The true explanation of God's action is that at his creation He had already determined Job's lot in life, without regard to his guilt or innocence. And so when he is already filled with suffering, God is preparing fresh tortures.

13. *All these . . . this*, i.e. the secret purpose described in the following verses, to chastise Job whether he were a sinner or not. *In Thy thought*, lit. 'with Thee' (cf. xxvii. 11).

14-15. The three clauses 'If I should sin,' 'if I should be wicked' and 'if I should be innocent' represent all possible alternatives. The first refers to trifling faults committed through ignorance or inadvertence; the second to deliberate sins (Num. xv. 30); the third to freedom from all sin. Whatever his conduct be, his fate would be the same.

15c-17c. Even now, when he has had his fill of sorrow, he must look forward to new tortures. *Drunken with affliction.* The Heb. has 'see thou my affliction,' but modern critics generally read 'drunken' which differs only slightly from the present text, and forms a good parallel to 'filled with ignominy.' In iii. 24, he stated that 'sighing' was his food, and 'roaring' is drink. This verse, as it stands, is isolated, and many critics regard it as a gloss; but the parallel verse had been omitted by mistake, and added at the end of the strophe (see below).

16. *Thou wilt exalt thyself.* In the text we have the third person, which can only refer to 'My head' of v. 15b. But as the subject is too remote most critics regard the word as corrupt. The second person is suggested by the following clauses: *Like a lion.* Cf. vii. 12: 'Am I a Sea or a Dragon?' It is the object (me), not the subject (thou) that is compared to a lion.

17. *Witnesses,* i.e. God will charge him with new crimes, will find new causes for vexation. The figure of the trial which underlies the greater part of the speech accounts for the reference to 'witnesses.' Therefore there is no necessity to change the text and read 'enmity' (cf. Greek), to get a better parallel to 'vexation.' 17c. Lit. 'changes and service with me.' If the text is correct, we must assume that the writer is employing a new metaphor—He brings up fresh levies of troops against Job. But the essential verb is wanting (cf. xix. 12). The abrupt change of construction shows that 17c is not to be taken with 17a-b; as we have seen, 15c is another isolated half-verse, and it is probable that the two originally stood together. The meaning in that context is quite clear. When he had his fill of suffering he might hope for relief. But no, for him it will be one *period of service* after another. 'Changes and service,' therefore, means a repetition of hard service. The clause is further developed in 16-17b.

18-22. Why then was I ever born? Let me have peace during the short interval of life that remains, before I go to the eternal gloom of Sheol.

18. Job returns to the theme of his original complaint (iii. 11ff. cf. vi. 8ff). The second clause may be translated 'Oh that I had died,' and it is possible that the optative particle was in the original (cf. Greek).

19. Cf. Jer. xx. 17: 'And so my mother would have been my grave.'

20. *Of my life.* The Heb. has: 'Are not my days few? And cease. . . .' Instead of the word 'cease' we should probably read the word for 'life' with Greek and Syriac. With 20b compare 'Look away from me, that I may be cheerful before I go hence and be no more' (Ps. xxxix. 14). Many critics hold that we should read 'look away' here as in the Psalm, instead of the unusual idiom in the text: lit. 'place (Thyself) away from me.'

21. Cf. vii. 10; xvi. 22. In the Babylonian poem '*The Descent of Ishtar*' the underworld is called 'the land of no-return' (cf. Dhorme, *Choix de textes Assyro-babyloniens*, p. 326).

22. This verse has given some trouble to commentators. It seems to contain a number of repetitions and metrical irregularities, and various excisions and emendations have been suggested to make it run more smoothly. Some even go further, and omit the whole verse as a gloss (Bickell, Duhm, Beer). But all these opinions are based on a misunderstanding. The repetitions are due to the fact that he describes the day and the night of Sheol in similar terms; for Sheol, like the earth, has a day



and a night. The terms have a certain analogy to the curse which Job calls down upon the day and night of his birth (iii. 2ff). As in the latter passage, he describes the day and the night as possessed by darkness and deprived of light.

*Whose gloom.* For the 'night' of Sheol he uses a rare word for darkness (Amos iv. 13). This is not comparable to the darkness of the earthly night; it is a more intense darkness (the same word as in iii. 6a). *Deathshade without order.* There is nothing to correspond to the moon and the stars of the earthly night. Cf. iii. 9. *Whose brightness*, lit. 'when it brightens.' The dawn of Sheol will not be like the earthly dawn; it will be a continuation of the 'dense darkness' of the night (cf. iii. 5). *And seeth not, etc.* This clause is found only in the Greek, and critics generally disregard it as a gloss. But the tendency of the Greek is to abbreviate, not to expand, and the clause is obviously necessary to complete the description. It is parallel to 22b; the day of Sheol, like the night, will be deprived of light. Cf. iii. 4, and with 22c compare xi. 17: 'And darkness shall be as the morning,' which is the exact antithesis.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> With the whole description we might compare that of the Babylonian underworld:

To the house of darkness, abode of Nergal,  
To the house which one enters, but leaves not;  
To the road on which one goes but returns not,  
To the house where he that enters is bereft of light,  
The place where one's food is dust, one's meat clay,  
Where they see not the light, they abide in darkness.

(*Descent of Ishtar*, lines 4-9).

## SOPHAR'S FIRST SPEECH, xi.

*Argument.* Sophar's speech, like Bildad's, is a defence of God's justice; the latter has shown that the death of Job's family was in accordance with the traditional doctrine regarding the fate of the wicked; Sophar shows that Job's affliction also is not a violation of God's justice.

For Job, though he may claim to be conscious of no sin, is not pure in the sight of God. For God's knowledge far transcends that of men (2-6). The depth of His knowledge cannot be fathomed by man. He can therefore reveal secrets unknown to man, and whether He leaves sins hidden and unpunished, or reveals them by punishing the culprit, depends on His own will (7-10).

Seeing then that nothing escapes the knowledge of God, and that man is essentially sinful, Job must assume that God is justified in afflicting him, and his proper course is to beg God's mercy (11-15). If he do this, he will be restored to happiness; for it is only the wicked that are without hope (16-20).

*Strophic arrangement* : 5 : 5 : 5.

xi. 1 And Sophar the Namaathite answered and said :

2 Shall a fluent talker not be answered ?

And a man of ready speech be accounted right ?

3 Shall thy babblings make men keep silent,

And shalt thou mock, and none rebuke ?

4 And shalt thou say : ' My doctrine is pure,

And I am clean in Thy sight ' ?

5 But Oh that God might speak,

And open His lips with thee,

6 And declare to thee the secrets of wisdom !

It is because He is wonderful in counsel and knowledge

That He requiteth thee for thy iniquity.

7 Canst thou reach the limit of God ?

Or attain to the end of the Almighty ?

8 It is higher than the heavens. what canst thou do ?

It is deeper than Sheol, what canst thou know ?

- 9 It is longer than the earth in measure,  
Wider than the sea.
- [xii. 22 He can disclose secret things out of the darkness,  
And bring death-shade forth to the light ;]
- 10 Should He overlook, and keep shut up,  
Or make public, who shall prevent Him ?
- 11 And He knoweth sinful men,  
And seeth iniquity, and considereth it,
- 12 And vain man is devoid of understanding,  
Man is born a wild ass's colt ;
- 13 If thou set thy heart aright,  
And spread out thy hands towards Him,
- 14 If iniquity be in thy hand, put it far away,  
And let not injustice dwell in thy tent,
- 15 Then thou wilt lift up thy face without spot,  
And thou wilt be steadfast, and not afraid.
- 16 For then thou wilt forget thy misery,  
And remember it as waters that have passed away ;
- 17 And thy life shall arise brighter than the noon-day,  
And should it be dark, it shall be as the morning ;
- 18 And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope,  
And thou shalt look around, and lie down securely ;
- 19 And thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee  
afraid,  
And many shall court thy favour ;
- 20 But the eyes of the wicked shall languish,  
And escape shall be cut off from them,  
And their hope—the expiry of the soul.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xi. 2a. 1. רַב (G. Targ. Vulg. Sym.). M T רב. 6b-c. 1. וְרַעַת.  
M T וְרַע כִּי. 6c. 1. יִשְׁוֶה or יִשְׁאֵל. M T יִשְׁוֶה. 8a. 1. מִשְׁמַיִם.  
(G. Vulg.). M T שְׁמַיִם. 11b. 1. וְלוֹ (cf. Syr.). M T וְלֹא.  
17a. 1. חֲלָדָךְ (G.). M T חֲלָד. 17b. 1. תִּעָפֶה ? (cf. Syr. Targ.).  
M T תִּעָפֶה.

## COMMENTARY.

2-4. Mere eloquence will not convince us. You may claim to be free from sin, but God's action is based on knowledge far superior to yours.

2. Sophar, like Bildad (viii. 2), considers that Job is trying to make eloquence take the place of argument. *A fluent talker.* Hebrew has 'multitude of words,' but the Greek '*one mighty in words*' give a better parallel to 'a man of ready speech.' *A man of ready speech*, lit. 'a man of lips.' Cf. 'a man of tongue' (Ps. cxl. 12; Ecclus. viii. 3).

3. His speech is mere 'babblings,' words devoid of sense. It is worse, for it finds fault with God's management of the universe.

4. Sophar merely gives the general sense of Job's speech. *My doctrine*, i.e. the point of view set forth in his speech, that God has treated him harshly, seeing that he is innocent. *In Thy sight.* Job claimed, according to Sophar, that not only is he conscious of no sin, but even God can see no fault in him. This is the point which Sophar takes up in 7ff: Can you claim to know the extent of God's knowledge?

5-6a. Sophar is willing to concede that Job is 'perfect and upright' in the sense that he is not conscious of any sin. But God's knowledge is infinitely superior to man's; and if God spoke, He could reveal many faults which Job has committed without full advertence or in ignorance. These are the 'secrets of God's wisdom.'

6b-c. This verse creates considerable difficulty. Lit. 'For He (or it) is double (or wonderful) in counsel; and know that God causeth to forget for thee of thine iniquity.' The subject of the first part may be either 'wisdom' or 'secrets,' thus: 'It is double (i.e. manifold) in effectual working' (Rev. Vers., Peake); 'They are ambiguous to the understanding' (Dhorme). The phrase 'he causeth to be forgotten to thee of thy iniquity' is a rather awkward manner of saying 'He really does not punish you as much as you deserve.'

It is to be noted that the second line of the verse is abnormally long, yet it cannot be divided into two members; 6b, on the other hand, is rather short. All the difficulties presented by the present text disappear if we suppose that the word 'and know' (to be read 'and knowledge') originally belonged to the first half of the verse. The whole verse then consists of a causal sentence of which 6c is the principal clause: 'It is because He is wonderful (or infinite) in wisdom and knowledge that He requiteth thee for thy iniquity.' *Requiteth thee.* Some change is necessary in the present text. We might read either the verb used in xxxiii. 27, which demands the insertion of a letter, or adopt the suggestion of Ehrlich (cf. Torczyner, Dhorme) and read the verb 'He shall call thee to account for.' With the thought of the verse compare xxii. 5.

7-10. God's infinite knowledge is beyond man's power to explore. Therefore He can reveal secrets unknown to man. Whether He chooses to overlook these hidden sins, and leave them hidden, or to reveal them to men by punishing the culprit, depends on His own will.

7. Job's claim to be pure in God's sight implies that he has explored all God's knowledge. *Limit*, lit. 'searching out'; here it means the utmost bound of His nature, as the parallel ('end') shows. Cf. xxxviii. 16.

8. It is as impossible to explore the knowledge of God as it is to explore the universe itself, because God is infinite. (Cf. xxxviii. 16-18). St. Paul in Eph. iii. 18, similarly refers to the 'breadth and length and height and depth' in speaking of the full comprehension of the truths of the Gospel.

xii. 20. This verse is acknowledged by the majority of modern critics to be out of place in its present context. It is more than a mere coincidence that this strophe lacks one verse, and that xii. 20 fits in admirably between verses 9 and 10.

10. *Should He overlook*. In ix. 11, the verb means 'to glide by,' and by an extension of the same meaning, it may be translated 'overlook' or 'pass over.' Or *keep shut up*, i.e. without demanding due atonement. The same thought is expressed by Job himself in a different context: 'My transgressions would be sealed up in a bag, and thou wouldst pardon (lit. 'plaster over') my iniquity' (xiv. 17). Or *publish*, i.e. make them known to the world, as in Job's case, by chastising the culprit.

11-15. But no action of man escapes the notice of God (11), and man is by his very nature sinful (12). Therefore it is useless for Job to protest that he is without sin. He must expiate his sin, and beg for pardon.

11. Note the emphatic pronoun ('He'). God's knowledge is not like man's. *Sinful men*, lit. 'men of vanity.' Cf. 'If I have walked with *vanity*' (xxxix. 5). *Considereth it*. The Hebrew has 'considereth not,' which may be interpreted to mean 'without having to investigate' (cf. xxxiv. 24); but this is forcing the meaning of the verb. It is better to read the pronominal particle instead of the negative; the two are often confused. No sin escapes His attention, and no man is without sin. Cf. iv. 17ff; xv. 14ff; xxxiv. 21ff.

12. Compared with God, man is by nature a 'fool' and prone to sin. This verse has received the most diverse interpretations. Thus Dhorme: 'An empty man becometh wise, and a foal becometh a grown wild ass'; Rev. Vers.: 'Vain man is void of understanding, yea, a man is born a wild ass's colt'; Peake: 'So an empty man gets understanding, and a wild ass's colt is born a man.'

Let us begin with 12b. Does it mean 'A wild ass's colt is born a man' (i.e. becomes a man), or 'a man is born (i.e. is by nature) a wild ass's colt'? If we have regard to the context here, and to the speech of Eliphaz, the argument of which is very like

Sophar's, there can be no reasonable doubt that the second is correct. The 'wild ass' is the symbol of unrestrained liberty (Gen. xvi. 12; Job xxxix. 5ff), and therefore a fitting symbol for man who has a natural tendency to sin. Thus understood the clause means exactly the same as the statements of Eliphaz in iv. 17-21 and xv. 14-16. *Man is born*, i.e. is by nature (Prov. xvii. 7).

The first part must be taken in a somewhat similar sense. The only difficulty is the verb, which occurs only here and in Cant. iv. 9. Normally, it should mean 'to get intelligence' (cf. Dhorme, Peake); but sometimes the *piel* form of denominative verbs has a private sense (cf. Joüon, 52, d). This is the more probable meaning in Cant., and here we have the passive in the same sense. This meaning seems to be presupposed by verse 13. Cf. iv. 17-21; v. 7.

13. Job's heart, like that of all men, has been wayward. He must correct that tendency, and pray to God for restoration to health. *Set thy heart aright*. There is probably an allusion to the verb used in verse 12b.

14. But that his prayer for pardon may be heard, he must first put away the fruits of his sin, if any. Here Sophar is considering the possibility that Job may have unwittingly enriched himself at the expense of others. These ill-gotten goods which he now possesses must be restored. Compare xxii. 23-24.

15. When he has put away his iniquity, then and only then, can he ask God for relief from his misery, and his request will be granted, for the prayer will be that of one 'without spot.' We find precisely the same method of reasoning in Is. i. 16-18: first repent of your sins, and then your condition will be changed. *And not afraid*. There is probably an allusion to Job's words in x. 15.

16-20. His misery will be forgotten in the new life of happiness which will ensue; he will be protected from all danger, and restored to a position of influence; for it is only the wicked who are without hope.

16. His suffering will pass away like a winter torrent (cf. vi. 15).

17. Light is a symbol of joy, as darkness is of sorrow; Job's life will be like the noon-day (cf. Is. ix. 1ff; lviii. 8, 11). *Should it be dark*. Trouble may come, but it will be trifling; it will quickly pass away. There may be a contrast intended with Job's own description of his prospects in x. 21-22: instead of a day of gloom followed by a night of deeper gloom, which is the prospect if he should die, he will enjoy a day of noon-tide splendour followed by a night of the brightness of morning. If the word be pointed as a noun (Syr. Targ.), *darkness* might refer to his present state as the forerunner of a life of happiness.

18. *Because there is hope*. Cf. 'my days . . . are come to an end *without hope*.' He will now have the prospect of a long and happy life. Notice the contrast between Job's *hope* if he repent, and the *hope* of the wicked (20c).

*Thou wilt look around.* The Hebrew word means either 'to search' (iii. 21) or 'to spy out' (xxxix. 29). It may have the same meaning here as Eliphaz's 'thou shalt visit thy abode and miss nothing' (v. 24). Job will look around and see nothing to cause anxiety. Some critics doubt if the word can have this shade of meaning. Ehrlich derives the verb from a different root 'to protect' (cf. Arabic): 'Thou wilt be protected.' The Greek seems to have read 'without fear.' This would give the most suitable meaning, if we were certain that it is not merely a free translation.

19. Job will be once more a man of standing in the community. He will have no enemies; on the contrary, all men will delight to show him honour and respect, and cultivate his friendship. He will not be an object of contempt as he is now. *Seek thy favour*, lit. 'make sweet thy face.' Cf. Prov. xix. 6; Ps. xlv. 13.

20. But the wicked have no such hope of recovery. Compare Prov. xxiv. 16: 'For a just man shall fall seven times and shall rise again; but the wicked shall fall down into evil.' Disaster may fall on the just as well as the wicked; but the former have hope of recovery by repentance, the latter have none.

## JOB'S REPLY TO SOPHAR, xii.-xiv.

*Argument.* The Speech consists of three parts: the first and the second addressed to the three friends, the third addressed to God.

a) *The Law of retribution.* Everyone knows that, in fact, the just man is a laughing-stock, while the wicked are secure (2-6). Is it not self-evident that God is responsible for this, as all living things depend on Him for life (7-12)? He is all-wise and all-powerful; He controls the forces of nature, rules the destinies of both nations (13-15, 23-25) and individuals (16-21)

b) *Rebuke of the friends.* This being so, your inference that I have sinned is false, and due to special pleading on God's behalf (6-11). But by thus wronging me with your calumnies, you are yourselves guilty of sin, for which God will call you to account (12-16).

c) *Address to God.* If I could only state my case, without fear, I should certainly gain victory (17-22). I have committed no sins to merit such chastisement; but You are afflicting me for the sins of my youth, and watching for similar lapses in my present life (23-27). A frail man like me is too insignificant to merit such scrutiny; let me have an interval of happiness, before death (xiv. 1-6). If only the sojourn in Sheol were merely temporary, and the old relations of friendship could then be resumed (13-17)! But no, man is not like the tree which dies and blooms again; he dies to rise no more (7-12); he is rather like a lifeless boulder fallen from a cliff, or dust washed away by the flood; his departure is definite and final, and he is for ever cut off from life on earth (18-22).

*Strophic arrangement:* 5 : 6 : 5.

xii. 1 And Job answered and said :

2 Verily, ye are the people [of intelligence],  
And with you wisdom will die !

3 But I have intelligence as well as you,  
I fall not short of you,  
And with whom are not such things as these :

4 A laughing-stock to his fellow am I,  
Who call on God and answer Him,  
A laughing-stock is a just, a perfect man !

5 There is contempt for calamity in the mind of one  
at ease,

A blow for them whose foot hath slipped ;



- 6 The tents of robbers are prosperous,  
And they that provoke God are secure,  
Such as have made might their God !
- 7 But ask now the beasts, and they will teach thee,  
And the fowls of the air, and they will tell thee ;
- 8 Or speak to the earth, and it will teach thee,  
And the fishes of the sea will inform thee ;
- 9 Who among all these knoweth not,  
That the hand of God hath done this,
- 10 In whose hand is the soul of every living thing,  
And the life-breath of all mankind ?
- 11 Doth not the ear try words ?  
And the palate taste its food ?
- 12 In old age is wisdom,  
And in length of days understanding.
- 13 With Him are wisdom and might,  
He hath counsel and understanding ;
- 14 If He break down, there is no building up,  
If He prison a man, there is no releasing ;
- 15 If He withhold the waters, they dry up,  
If He send them forth, they overturn the earth ;
- [23 He maketh nations great, and He maketh them  
perish,  
He expandeth peoples, and He destroyeth them ;
- 24 He taketh away the intelligence of the heads of the  
people of the land  
And maketh them wander in a trackless waste,
- 25 And they grope in darkness, without light.  
(*And He maketh them stagger like a drunken man*).]
- 16 With Him are strength and resource,  
The misled and the misleader are His ;
- 17 He maketh counsellors walk barefoot,  
And judges He maketh fools ;
- 18 He looseth the girdle of kings,  
And bindeth a loin-cloth on their loins ;

- 19 He maketh priests walk barefoot,  
And the nobles He overthroweth ;  
20 The trusty He depriveth of speech,  
And He taketh away the discretion of the  
elders ;  
21 He poureth contempt on princes,  
And taketh away the obstinacy of the strong.  
(22, *cf.* xi. 7-10 ; 23-25, *supra.*)

- xiii. 1 Lo, mine eye hath seen it all,  
Mine ear hath heard, and perceived it ;  
2 As ye know, so do I know also,  
I fall not short of you ;  
3 But I would speak with the Almighty,  
I would fain argue with God ;  
4 But ye are sham physicians,  
Worthless healers are ye all ;  
5 Oh that ye would keep silent,  
And it would be wisdom for you !  
  
6 Hear ye, now, my rebuke,  
And attend to the argument of my lips :  
7 Will ye speak falsehood for God ?  
And for Him will ye utter deceit ?  
8 Will ye show partiality for Him ?  
Will ye plead on God's behalf ?  
9 Will it be well when He shall put you to the test?  
As one deceiveth men, will ye deceive Him ?  
10 He will surely reprove you,  
If in secret ye show partiality ;  
11 Will not His majesty terrify you ?  
And His terror fall upon you ?  
  
12 Your old saws are proverbs of ashes,  
Your answers are answers of clay !  
13 Be silent, let me alone, and I too will speak,  
Come upon me what may !  
14 I will take my flesh in my teeth,  
And put my life in my hand ;

15 Even though He should slay me, I will not  
quail,

I will indeed argue my ways before Him ;

16 Even this must be my salvation :

That it is no impious man that cometh before  
Him.

17 Hear ye attentively my speech,

And let my declaration be in your ears :

18 Behold, could I institute a suit,

I know that I should be justified ;

19 Who is he that will contend with me ?

For presently, I shall be silent and expire ;

20 Only two things do not unto me,

Then from Thy face I will not hide :

21 Withdraw Thy hand from me,

And let not Thy terror affright me ;

22 Then call Thou, and I will reply,

Or let me speak, and answer 'Thou me !

23 How many are my iniquities and my sins ?

Make me to know my transgression and my  
sin !

24 Why dost thou hide Thy face,

And account me as Thy foe ?

25 Wilt Thou harass a driven leaf ?

And pursue a dry straw ?

26 For Thou writest down bitter things against me,

And makest me possess the sins of my youth,

27 And puttest my feet in the stocks ;

And Thou markest all my paths,

And takest note of all my footprints.

xiv. 1 A man, born of woman,

Short-lived, full of trouble,

2 Who cometh forth like a flower, and withereth,

And fleeth away like a shadow, and abideth  
not—

- 3 Upon such a one dost Thou open Thine eyes ?  
And him dost Thou bring into judgment  
with Thee ?
- 4 Oh that the clean perished not like the un-  
clean !
- 5 Seeing that his days are determined,  
The number of his months is with Thee,  
Thou hast assigned him his limit, which he  
cannot exceed,
- 6 Look away from him, and let him be,  
Till, like a hireling, he accomplish his day,  
[xiii. 28 And he wear out like a rotten thing,  
And like a garment that is moth-eaten !]

- [13 Oh that Thou wouldst hide me in Sheol !  
That Thou wouldst shelter me till thy wrath  
turn !  
That Thou wouldst appoint me a term, and re-  
member me !
- 14 If a man might die and come to life again,  
All the days of my service would I wait,  
Till my relief should come.
- 15 Thou wouldst call me, and I would answer thee,  
And Thou wouldst regard the work of thy hands ;
- 16 For then Thou wouldst number my steps,  
Thou wouldst not watch for my sins ;
- 17 My transgressions would be sealed up in a bag,  
And Thou wouldst cover up my iniquity.]

- 7 For a tree hath hope,  
If it be cut down, it will sprout again,  
And its shoots will not cease ;
- 8 Even if its root wax old in the earth,  
And its stump die in the ground,
- 9 Through the scent of water it will bud,  
And bring forth boughs like a young plant ;
- 10 But man dieth, and remaineth lifeless,  
And man expireth, and where is he ?

- 11 The waters may fail from the sea,  
And the stream be parched and dried up,  
But when man hath lain down, he shall rise no  
more.
- 12 Till the heavens decay, they shall not awake,  
And they shall not arise out of their sleep.
- 18 But as a mountain falleth headlong,  
And as a rock is moved out of its place,
- 19 As waters wear away stones,  
As the storm-flood washeth away the dust of the  
earth,  
So Thou destroyest the hope of man ;
- 20 Thou overthrowest him utterly, and he goeth,  
Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him  
away ;
- 21 His sons come to honour, and he knoweth not,  
They are brought low, and he perceiveth them not ;
- 22 Only about himself can his flesh have pain,  
And about himself doth his soul mourn.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xii. 2a. Add לִבָּב. Cf. G<sup>a</sup>. *μόνοι*, Vulg. *solī* = לִבָּב.  
 3b. omit ? (=xiii. 2b.). 9b. 1. אֱלֹהֵי (7 MSS.). M T יהוה.  
 18a. 1. מוֹסֵר (Targ. Vulg.). M T מוֹסֵר. 21b. 1. מִצָּח (צ = י cf. vi. 17a). M T מְנִיחַ. 22. transp. post xi. 9. 23-25. transp. post 15. 23b. 1. לְאֲמִים (5 MSS. Syr. Targ.). M T לְגוֹיִם.  
 1. וַיִּמָּחֶם. M T וַיִּנָּחֶם. 24a. omit עַם (G.) ? 25c. gloss on יִתְעַם (24b.) ? xiii. 12b. גַּב = answer (cf. Syr. Ar. Beer, Dhorme). 14a. omit עַל-מָה (dittogr. cf. G.). 15a. 1. אֲחִיל. M T אֲיִחֵל. 28. transp. post xiv. 6.

xiv. 3b. 1. וְאֵתוּ (G. Vulg. Syr.). M T וְאֵתִי. 4. 1. כְּמָמָא. M T כְּמָמָא. 1. אָבֵר. M T אָחֵר. 6a. 1. וַיִּחְדַּל. M T וַיִּחְדַּל. 7-12. transp. post 17 (see Comm.). 12b. 1. בְּלוֹת (Aq. Sym. Theod. Vulg. Syr.). M T בְּלָתִי. 14a. 1. וַיִּחְיֶה (cf. G.). M T הִיחְיֶה. 18a. 1. נָפֹל יָפֹל (G. Syr.) M T נֹפֵל יָפֹל. 19b. 1. סָפִיחָה (cf. Ass. *sahâpu*). M T סָפִיחָה.

## COMMENTARY.

2-6. You have not a monopoly of intelligence as you seem to fancy (2). Everyone knows, on the contrary, that the pious man is in misery (3-4), the poor are scorned and ill-treated by the rich (5), the robber and the impious unmolested (6).

2. *Ye are the people of intelligence.* Hebrew has 'ye are the people'; but Greek (A) and Vulg. had before them an extra word ('alone'), which was probably a corruption of the word for 'heart.' Cf. in the next verse 'I have intelligence' (lit. 'heart'), which favours this emendation.

3. I claim to be no whit less wise than you; but it does not need special intelligence to know this, namely, the facts enumerated in 4-6 (cf. ix. 13). Verse 3b is identical with xiii. 2b, and is regarded by many as an interpolation here.

4. *Am I.* Some critics (following Syriac) change to the third person, on the ground that Job is speaking of the just in general. But in xxi. 4, 7ff and xxiii. 15ff, where he likewise deals with the absence of retribution, it is his own case, not that of the just in general, that he contrasts with the prosperity of the wicked. *And answer.* The usual translation is 'and He (i.e. God) answereth him.' But there is no reason for the change of subject, and if the just man is afflicted, he cannot be described as one whom God answers. The word 'answer' is used in Os. ii. 17 in the sense 'to be docile' (without object), and in 1 K. xiii. 7 in the sense of 'obey' (with object). This is the meaning here. The subject of both verbs is the same, and the two clauses are the equivalent of the description of Job in the Prologue (i. 1): 'a man perfect and upright (=4c), one that feareth God and avoideth evil (=4b).'

5. They who are fallen on evil days are treated by the wealthy with contempt and even with violence. Cf. xxiv. 5ff. *For calamity*, i.e. for those who are suffering calamity, the poor, widows, orphans, etc. *One at ease*, the wealthy. *A blow.* The word may be rendered as a participle 'it is ready' i.e. contempt. But critics generally regard the word as a noun meaning 'stroke.' Here it is parallel to 'contempt.'

6. *Robbers . . . they that provoke God.* These are the wicked who injure their fellow-men (robbers), and the impious, who rebel against God. *Such as have made etc.* Lit. 'to him who hath brought God in his hand.' The meaning is clear from passages like Mich. ii. 7: 'Whose God is their hand'; Gen. xxxi. 29: 'My hand is my God' (cf. Deut. xxviii. 32; Hab. i. 11). Cf. xxii. 8, where Eliphaz seems to allude to this passage.

7-12. God is responsible both for the suffering of the innocent, and the prosperity of the wicked. This is an obvious fact known to all creation (7-9), recognised both by men in general and by the wise (11-12), for God is absolute ruler of all men (10).

7. Even the lower animals (beasts and birds) know this, namely what is stated in verse 9. Cf. xxxv. 11: 'Who teacheth

us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven.' These are less intelligent than man, and yet they know this.

8. Many critics change the first half of this verse in order to get a category of living things corresponding to 'beasts' and 'birds' and 'fishes.' Thus, Dhorme and Duhm read '*reptiles* of the earth'; Ewald '*animals* of the earth.' But it is doubtful if any change should be made; the two verses include all created things, and in verse 7, he contrasts heaven and earth, in verse 8, land and sea. The 'beasts' include all the animals of the earth, and, having been mentioned in 7a, they could not be mentioned again in 8a.

9. All these creatures know that God is the cause of the absence of moral sanction in the world. Cf. ix. 24. *God*. The text has 'Jahweh'; but as the poet studiously avoids the Sacred Name, it is generally held that its use here is due to a scribal error. Seven MSS. have the usual 'Eloah,' and the mistake may be due to Is. xl. 20. *This*, namely, what has been described in 4ff, the absence of retribution.

10. For He has complete dominion over all creatures, both animals and men.

11. Just as man distinguishes between nauseous and pleasant foods by the taste, so by hearing he can distinguish between truth and falsehood. Cf. vi. 30; xxxiv. 3. The meaning is that any man who has ears to hear (as opposed to the 'wise' in the next verse) can discern the truth of Job's contention.

12. This is also the conclusion to be derived from the experience of the wise. For the association of age and wisdom cf. iv. 8f; viii. 8ff; xv. 9f; xxxii. 7f. Dhorme places 11-12 after verse 8.

13-15 + 23-25. God's power of over the universe, and over the nations.

13. God is endowed with 'wisdom and understanding' like the wise, but also with 'strength' and 'counsel,' i.e. the capacity of ordering the affairs of the universe, and the power to execute His plans. Cf. Ps. cvii. and Is. xlv. 24-28.

14. God's might is irresistible; He can destroy cities, and reduce men to slavery, and no human power can prevent him. The thought of this verse is developed in 23-25, and in 16-22.

15. He can bring about a drought or a deluge.

23-25. This group of verses, which deals with the fate of nations as distinct from their rulers, is probably to be inserted here. The construction and meaning of the clauses is the same as 13-15; verse 16 presupposes 24-25; in Psalm xxxiii. 8-11, the power of God over the nations is connected with His power over the material universe as here.

23. *Maketh great*. Another reading 'He misleadeth' (Theod. Syr. and 7 MSS.) is also possible, but the parallelism with the other clauses favours the usual reading. *Destroyeth*. The text



has 'maketh them settle,' which does not suit the context. We expect some word denoting God's destructive power. The change of a letter gives the word 'blot out' which is often used in this sense (Ex. xvii. 14; Jud. xxi. 17).

24. The ruin of the nations is due to the folly of its rulers. *Heads of the people of the land.* Many critics omit the word 'people,' which is not in the Greek. But the omission by the Greek is never a sure guide. This verse and the whole of the following strophe are probably alluding to the Exile. 24b is identical with Ps. cvii. 40b.

25. The leaders deprived of intelligence are like men lost in a trackless desert, or like men groping in the darkness, unable to take proper measures to deal with an emergency. Compare Is. xxix. 10. The two final words of this verse are probably an addition: a) the verb is repeated from 24b; b) the meaning is not quite appropriate; c) the words are naturally explained as a gloss on 'maketh them wander,' which is taken in a different sense, probably influenced by Is. xix. 14. Verses 24-25 form the transition to the next strophe, which describes the fate of 'the heads of the people of the land.'

#### 16-22. God's power over individuals.

16. The new strophe begins like the preceding: God has infinite power and wisdom. *Misled and misleader*, i.e. the rulers (the heads of the people of the land' of verse 24) who not only err themselves but lead the people into error. The ruin of these leaders, of whom various categories are mentioned, forms the subject of this strophe.

17. Counsellors and judges. In iii. 14, we find mention of 'kings and counsellors,' and in Is. i. 26 of 'judges and counsellors.' The three include the highest classes in the state.

18. *Girdle.* The word usually means 'moral discipline' or 'instruction.' Most critics, however, by a change of pointing, read the word for 'bond.' Dhorme takes this to be the cord which binds the kings as slaves, so that there is an antithesis between 18a and 18b: if they are slaves he can free them, if they are free he can make them slaves. But the symmetry of the verses is against this. Peters argues that the word means an ornament of some kind, and this would agree best with the context (cf. Vulg. *balteum*). God strips off the symbol of royalty, and puts on that of a slave. Cf. 'To subdue the nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings' (Is. xlv. 2).

19. Priests and nobles. *Nobles*, lit. 'permanent ones' (cf. Amos v. 25; Deut. xxi. 4; Num. xxiv. 21). Smend, however, claims that the primary meaning of the root is not 'permanent' but 'strong' (Comm. on Eccles. xl. 13).

20. The trusty and the elders. These are the wise men who advise the civil rulers. In one case, they may have discretion, but they are deprived of speech; in the other, their judgment is perverted.

21. 21a = Ps. cvii. 40a. *Obstinacy.* The word is found only

here. It is usually taken as a variant of the word for 'belt' found in Is. xxiii. 10, and Ps. cix. 19. But the verb is not that used in 18. It is most likely a scribal error for the word for 'brow,' and the literal meaning of the whole clause 'maketh slack the brow.' In Ezech. iii. 7-9 we find the phrase 'make strong the *brow*' to express the opposite idea, 'to be obstinate.' Cf. Jer. iii. 3: 'thou hadst a harlot's *forehead*,' and Is. xlviii. 4: 'thy neck is an iron bar, and thy *brow brass*.'

22. *He reveals deep things out of darkness*, i.e. He reveals secrets. It is clear that this has nothing to do with the theme of 13-25. It is omitted by many critics as a gloss. See above on xi. 7-10.

xiii. 1-5. As far as the traditional wisdom is concerned, I have nothing to learn from you. But this leaves the problem unsolved. Being innocent, I have a claim against God, and you, by imputing sin to me, are like inferior physicians who apply the wrong remedy.

1. *Mine eye . . . ear*. He has learned it both from his own experience, and from the teaching of others.

2. He has nothing to learn from them. He means that the traditional wisdom, which he shares with them, cannot solve his problem, for the simple reason that he *knows* he is innocent.

3. The question is, Why does God make me, an innocent man, suffer? I merely claim an opportunity of arguing my case with God.

4. *Ye are sham physicians*, lit. 'plasterers of lies.' Instead of believing his protestations of innocence, they accuse him of sin. They are like physicians who apply a worthless remedy to a wound.

5. Cf. Prov. xvii. 28: 'Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise.'

6-11. Job's rebuke of his three friends. Because you wrong me by lying on God's behalf, God will eventually judge you. He will reprove you for your partiality, and His terror will fall upon you.

6. The rebuke is contained in the following verses.

7-8. Job makes two charges against them: they give false evidence against him, and show partiality for the other side. *Show partiality*, lit. 'lift up the face' (cf. Lev. xix. 15; Dt. x. 17; Ps. lxxxii. 2). Notice the emphatic position of the name of God in each verse—the absurdity of telling lies on God's behalf! Compare xvi. 2-10; xix. 2-6.

9. When God comes to give His decision on the matter, He will not be deceived by your lies, and the consequences will be unpleasant (cf. xix. 29).

10. Then His wrath will be turned upon you for your partiality. Your advocacy does not benefit God, and will be ruinous to yourselves.

11. Then *you* and not *I* will have to bear His wrath. The pronouns are emphatic. Cf. xix. 29.

12-16. Your speeches are beside the point; I will address myself directly to God, even at the risk of my life.

12. *Old saws*, i.e. their traditional maxims. *Answers*. The usual meaning of the word is 'defences,' from a root meaning 'back,' or another meaning 'boss of a shield.' But modern critics derive the word from a root found in Arabic and Syriac meaning 'answer.' *Ashes* and *clay* are symbols of what is perishable or unstable.

13. *Be silent, let me alone*. Lit. 'be silent *from* me.' They have interfered with his argument with God; let him now conduct the case for himself. *Come . . . what may*, cf. 2 Sam. xviii. 22-23.

14. The meaning of the verse has been obscured by the fact that the Hebrew has, by mistake, repeated the last word of verse 15. The word 'therefore' should be omitted; it is not in the Greek. Both members of the verse are proverbial statements for the exposure of one's life to deadly peril (cf. Jud. xii. 3; 1 Sam. xix. 5; xxviii. 21). Compare x. 1; xxiii. 6.

15. *I will not quail*. The text reads: 'I will not wait,' or 'I will not hope,' which is not suitable here. The *Qeri* 'I will hope in Him' is no improvement. The transposition of two letters gives the text translated above (Graetz, Ehrlich, Dhorme). *My ways*, i.e. my case, or my conduct.

16. But he has one ground of hope—his innocence. The meaning of this difficult verse is made clear by comparison with the parallel passage xxiii. 7: 'There an upright man would argue with Him, and I should win outright my suit.' Instead of the positive statement in the passage cited, we have here the same thing stated negatively—'it is *not* an *impious* man that cometh before Him.' Job is convinced of God's justice, and confident that, if he could but state his case, he would receive redress.

17-22. He invites his friends to hear his solemn declaration: 'I know that I shall be found in the right.' He asks only that God withdraw His terror, then he will be ready to answer any charge, and to bring charges in his turn.

17. *My speech . . . declaration*, i.e. that contained in verse 18.

18. *Could I institute*. The clause must be taken conditionally. For, actually, Job does not get an opportunity of arguing his case before God. Cf. xxiii. 3-7. *I should be justified*. The pronoun is emphatic: It is *I*, and not God. Cf. xiii. 7.

19. *Who is he that &c.* Cf. 'Oh would that I had one to hear me' (xxx. 35). The particle at the beginning of 19b can be rendered 'for now' or 'for then.' This leads to two different interpretations of the verse: a) if there were any to dispute my claim, I would be silent and die (Dhorme); and b) I wish that my case were tried at once, for *presently* I shall be no more (Peters). The latter has the support of the parallel in xvi. 18ff., where he begs for a speedy trial because of the approach of death. Cf. vii. 23; 'For presently I shall lie down in the dust.'

20-21. The 'two things' which God must remove if Job is to have a fair trial are: his suffering ('Thy rod') and the natural terror which he would feel in God's presence (*cf.* ix. 32-35). In xxxiii. 7, Elihu alludes to this verse.

22. *Call . . . answer.* The words are used in the technical legal sense. Job is ready to fill the role both of defendant and complainant. *Cf.* ix. 14-16; 35a.

23-27. Job's defence. What sins have I committed that You have changed from a friend to an enemy? Why do You persecute me mercilessly? Why punish me for the sins of my youth, or for trifling lapses? *Cf.* x. 12ff.

23. The first clause refers to the number, the second to the nature of his sins. As elsewhere, the reference is only to sins of ignorance or inadvertence, not to deliberate sins.

24. *To hide the face* is to show displeasure or anger (Ps. 9; xiii. 2; xxii. 25; xxx. 8). With 24b compare xix. 11; xxxiii. 10.

25. Surely, I am too insignificant to merit such vigilance. The thought is the same as vii. 17f; x. 16. *Cf.* 'After whom dost thou pursue? After a dead dog, after a flea.'

26. *Writest down*, i.e. as the chastisement to be inflicted. For this severe treatment at God's hands Job sees no reason. He can only surmise that God is punishing him for faults committed in his youth, before he was fully responsible, or that He is taking undue notice of trifling lapses in his present conduct. *Sins of my youth.* *Cf.* 'Remember not the sins of my youth' (Ps. xxv. 7).

27. There appears to be a contradiction between 27a and 27b: if his feet are in the stocks, how can he have paths to be watched? Commentators try to conceive some form of punishment which would at the same time give the prisoner the freedom of movement demanded by 27b. The most probable explanation is that 27a is to be taken with the previous verse. Then 26-27a will have reference to his present sufferings as punishment for the sins of his youth, and 27b-c to God's continual vigilance over his present conduct, with a view to finding new motives for afflicting him. *Thou markest*, lit. 'drawest a line about.' The form occurs only here. *Footprints*, lit. 'roots of my feet.' God not only watches the general direction which he takes (paths), but every step.

28. It is generally agreed that this verse is out of place; but critics are not agreed as to its original position. Merx places it after xiv. 2a; Bickell after 3, Beer after 2 or 3, Dhorme after 2. But the thought in xiv. 1-3 is not the same. In the latter passage, the theme is the brevity of human life, in this verse the inevitability of death. The most natural connection is with verse 6, to form the conclusion of the strophe.

xiv. 1-6. A man like Job who is mortal, short-lived and miserable, is too insignificant to be treated by God as an adversary. He, a just man, is no more exempt from death than the wicked

(4) ; his life-span is definitely determined. Let him then have an interval of peace before the end comes and he crumbles to dust.

1. The strophe deals, not with men in general, as usually interpreted, but with Job himself. This is clear from the reference to his suffering (1b), and from the concluding appeal. As in his first reply to Eliphaz (vii. 11-21), his passionate outburst against his harsh treatment is followed by a pathetic appeal for a respite from suffering before death. *Born of woman, &c.* All three expressions—born of woman (i.e. mortal), short-lived and full of trouble—are attributes of 'man' ; and grammatically, 'man' and 'such a one' (3) are in apposition. Compare the description of the nature of man in iv. 19-20.

2. This verse is a development of 'born of woman' and 'short-lived' of verse 1. Man is frail and mortal like a flower, his life passes quickly like a shadow. *Like a flower.* The same figure is used in the Psalms and Isaias (cf. Ps. xxxvii. 2 ; xc. 5-6 ; ciii. 15 ; Is. xl. 6-8). *Like a shadow.* Cf. viii. 9 ; Eccles. vi. 12.

3. Such a man as he has described (Job himself) is too insignificant to be made God's adversary. Cf. vii. 17-19.

4. This verse reads in the Hebrew : 'Who will give clean from unclean ? Not one.' This is usually interpreted as meaning : Man is by his nature sinful, and therefore none can be free from sin (cf. iv. 17). The Vulgate follows the Targum and interprets freely : None but God can make man clean who is naturally unclean. Others translate : 'Oh that clean might come from unclean.' (Peake, Gray). Others again omit the whole verse as a gloss. The objection to all these interpretations is that they do not fit in with the context, which deals not with the sinfulness of man, but with the inevitability of death. The introductory particle 'Oh that' requires a verb, which is wanting in the present text. I suggest that this is to be recovered by reading the verb 'perish' instead of 'one' by changing one letter. We have then but to read '*like the unclean*' for '*from the unclean*' to arrive at the text translated above. In verses 1-3 he has stated that death is the lot of all men ; here he expresses a wish that it were the fate of the wicked (unclean) only, and that the just should not perish with them. For 'clean and unclean' in this sense compare Eccles. ix. 2 : 'There is one event to the just and the wicked, to the good and the bad, to the clean and the unclean.' Since, however, all men must die, he expresses a wish in the next strophe that it might be possible to return from Sheol (xiv. 13).

5. But, alas, the just man will die as well as the wicked ; God has definitely fixed the years, months and days of his life.

6. Cf. vii. 19. *Like a hireling*, cf. vii. 1-2.

xiii. 28. This verse would form a fitting conclusion to the whole strophe, and should probably be inserted here. *Like a rotten thing.* The Greek has 'like a wine-skin,' which many critics prefer. But in Osee v. 12, we find 'rotteness' parallel to 'moth,' as here. *Like a garment.* Cf. Is. i. 9 : 'They shall wax old like a garment, the moth shall eat them up.'

13-17. The whole of this strophe has been misplaced. a) Verses 13-17 contrast with 1-6. The latter deal with the inevitability of death, the former with the vain wish for a return from Sheol (cf. 4 and 13). b) Verses 13-17 lead on to 7-12; the tree returning to life is an illustration of the return of the soul from Sheol. c) Verses 7-12 connect with 18ff: the tree which returns to life being contrasted with the stone or dust which remains unchanged.

If only man's sojourn in Sheol were temporary! Then I would wait patiently for the renewal of the old relations of friendship with God, when His present attitude towards me would be reversed.

13. If only Sheol were but a temporary shelter from God's wrath! *Appoint me a term*, refers back to verse 5; You have appointed my term on earth, oh that You would appoint my term in Sheol likewise!

14. *If a man might die, etc.* The Hebrew reads: 'If a man die, shall he come to life again?' In this form the text seems to suggest the possibility of a resurrection. But the Greek has the conjunction 'and' instead of the interrogative particle in 14b. The following verses show that he is dealing with a hypothetical case, which confirms the Greek reading. *Of my service*. The same word as in vii. 1, i.e. a definite period of military service or slavery. There it refers to the period of life on earth, here to the hypothetical period in Sheol. In each case he is like a soldier or slave waiting patiently for the time of his release.

15. Then, God's anger having passed, He would wish to renew the old relations of friendship, and Job would gladly respond. The relations of hostility which now exist would be completely changed. *Work of Thy hands*. He would no longer destroy His own handiwork as He now does (cf. x. 8ff).

16. This verse has been interpreted in two totally different senses. a) It describes God's present hostility towards Job. 'Now thou numberest my steps' is taken like xiii. 27, of watching with a view to detecting trivial faults. To make the second part agree with this, either the clause is treated as interrogative (R.V.) or the Greek reading: 'Thou dost not overlook' is adopted. This is the interpretation adopted by Rev. Version, Duhm, Beer, etc. b) It describes God's conduct in the hypothetical circumstances indicated in 13-15. In this case the initial particle is translated 'for then' (to introduce the apodosis, cf. iii. 10). Then God would number his steps, not, as at present, to discover sins, but to take note of his virtues (cf. xiii. 27). This interpretation is to be preferred.

17. The same difference of opinion prevails regarding this verse. According to the first interpretation mentioned above, at present God keeps his sins carefully treasured up against him; according to the second, then his sins would be completely hidden away out of sight and forgotten. The words 'sin,' 'transgression' and 'iniquity' are to be understood as in xiii.

22-23. God would no longer watch out for the trifling faults as He is doing now.

17. *Sealed up*. At present God makes him 'possess' the sins of his youth (xiii. 26), then God would not only cover them, but seal them up in a bag.

*Cover up*. Lit. 'plaster over,' i.e. conceal it from view, hence 'remit.' Cf. the use of the word 'cover' in this sense in Ps. xxxii. 5; Prov. x. 12; Ne. iii. 37; Ps. lxxxv. 3).

7-12. But such a hope is vain. For unlike a tree, which is cut down or dies, but comes to life again, man, when he dies, lies down to rise no more.

7-9. A tree may be cut down by man, or may die of itself, but when it is refreshed by the winter rain it throws out new shoots, *like a young plant*, i.e. like a plant grown from seed.

10. How different the fate of man! Cf. vii. 8-10. *Remaineth lifeless*. The verb means 'to be feeble,' 'to faint away'; here, in contrast with the tree, it refers to man's powerlessness to return to life. *Where is he?* i.e. he is vanished utterly. Cf. xx. 7.

11. All nature may change, but no change will come over the condition of the dead. The verse is probably based on Is. xix. 5, but there the meaning is different. In Isaias there is question of the misfortunes which are to come upon Egypt, one being the drying up of the Nile (the *sea* and the *river*), here there is reference to the ocean and rivers in general. Even though the whole world be changed, and the great oceans and rivers disappear, no change will come to man. The meaning is therefore the same as 'till the heavens decay' in the next verse. Cf. 'heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away' (Matt. xxiv. 35).

18-22. Man is rather like an inert mass such as a mountain, or rock, or stone, or dust: he is taken away by God and his body disintegrates.

18. The *mountain* and the *rock* are examples of inert bodies which, when moved by the forces of nature or otherwise, never recover their original position. *Falleth headlong*. Hebrew, reads 'falling, weareth away' but a slight change, suggested by Theod. and Syr., gives us 'falling falleth,' i.e. falls, to rise no more.

19. The *stone* and the *dust* are examples of things which disintegrate, and never recover their original form. *Storm-flood*. Heb. has 'its overflowings.' Budde's emendation 'water-spout, storm-flood' is generally accepted. *Hope of man*, cf. 17: 'a tree hath hope.'

20. The first part of the verse refers back to 18: like the mountain and the rock man is removed by God; similarly, 20b refers back to 19: like the stone and the dust he disintegrates. *Utterly* or for ever, i.e. his fate is irrevocable. *Changest his countenance*. This has reference to the change of man's appear-

ance when death supervenes. His body gradually disintegrates, as when water wears away a stone.

21. In Sheol the dead have no knowledge of things of earth. *Cf.* *xxi.* 21 ; and especially *Eccles.* *ix.* 5-6 : ' the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love and their hatred, and their envy is now perished ; neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun.' *Come to honour.* We might also translate ' become rich . . . become poor.'

22. He is concerned with himself alone. The text seems to say that, while the soul is in Sheol and the body in the grave, both are still regarded as part of his personality, and both still suffer pain. Peters takes the pain to refer to the separation of the soul from the body which is now in the grave. But both ' his flesh ' and ' his soul ' are here substitutes for the personal pronoun, and the meaning of the verse is clearly seen from its connection with 21b. He is not affected by the suffering of others, he is affected only by what concerns himself. *Cf.* *xxi.* 21.



## SECOND CYCLE OF SPEECHES—XV.—XXI.

*General character.* In this series the tone of the friends' speeches changes considerably. In the first series, all three were sympathetic and conciliatory. While they were rather shocked at the violence of his opening speech, they were agreed that Job's life had been exemplary; he had but to repent of some minor faults committed without advertence in order to be restored to happiness. But Job has shown no disposition to repent. By this obstinacy, and the rejection of God's warning conveyed by his suffering, he exposes himself to the doom of the 'sinner.' Hence, in this series of speeches, all three speakers have a common theme—the miserable fate of the wicked. This is the inevitable alternative if Job persists in his refusal to repent.

Job's first and second speeches are a vigorous protest against the accusations brought against him by his friends, who regard his affliction as proof of his sin. In his first speech (xvi–xvii), he describes how his appeal to God for redress against their calumnies has been rejected; but in the second (xix.), he expresses the conviction that God will vindicate his good name after his death. In the final speech of the series (xxi.), he answers directly their thesis on the fate of the wicked, and contradicts it in every detail.

## ELIPHAZ'S SECOND SPEECH, xv.

*Argument.* The Speech consists of two parts: a rebuke to Job for his obstinacy, and a description of the fate of the wicked.

a) *Rebuke to Job.* Job's language is not only futile but impious. Instead of manifesting a spirit of repentance, he is resentful of God's action, and this mentality reflected in his language will cause his ruin (2-6). He thinks so highly of his own wisdom that he rejects the counsel of the wise, and even the counsel of God Himself (7-11). He has given vent to his vexation against God, instead of reflecting that man is naturally impure and deserving of chastisement (12-16).

b) *The fate of the wicked.* It is the teaching of the ancients—and they have derived it from an old and untarnished tradition—that the wicked man lives in a state of continual anxiety (17-21a). For he knows that, despite his prosperity, disaster may come at any moment, and reduce him to poverty; and he knows that he himself is destined to die a miserable death (21b-24). Because of his rebellion against God, and his oppression of his fellow-men, his prosperity will not endure, and the day will come when he will not have even a night-lodge or hut in the lands over which he now holds sway (25-29). He will die prematurely, and his whole race will perish with him, like a tree which is suddenly blasted and destroyed (30-35).

*Strophic arrangement : 5 : 5 : 5.*

xv. 1 And Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said :

- 2 Doth a wise man answer with vain knowledge ?  
And fill his belly with the east wind ?
- 3 Doth he argue with speech that availeth not ?  
And with words that profit not ?
- 4 Yea, thou dost away with piety,  
Thou withholdest reverence before God ;
- 5 Because thy iniquity teacheth thy mouth,  
And thou choosest the language of the crafty,
- 6 Thine own mouth shall condemn thee, and not I,  
And thine own lips shall testify against thee.
- 7 Wert thou born the first of mankind ?  
Or wert thou brought forth before the hills ?
- 8 Dost thou hearken to the council of God ?  
And dost thou confine wisdom to thyself ?
- 9 What knowest thou that we know not ?  
What intelligence hast thou, that we have not ?

- 10 Both grey-headed and aged are among us,  
More advanced in days than thy father ;  
11 Are the consolations of God too little for thee ?  
And the word that dealeth gently with thee ?  
12 Why doth thy heart carry thee away ?  
And why do thine eyes roll ?  
13 For thou turnest thy passion against God,  
And lettest words out of thy mouth ;  
14 What is man, that he should be pure ?  
And one born of woman, that he should be just ?  
15 Lo, in His holy ones He trusteth not,  
And the heavens are not pure in His sight ;  
16 How much less one that is abominable and corrupt,  
Man, that drinketh in iniquity like water ?  
17 I will show thee, hearken to me,  
And that which I have seen I will relate ;  
18 What wise men tell,  
And their fathers have not concealed,  
19 To whom alone the land was given,  
And no stranger passed among them :  
20 All the days of the wicked  
He is in anxiety,  
And during the number of years laid up for the tyrant,  
21 The sound of terrors is in his ears.  
[31 Let him not trust in his greatness,  
He deceiveth himself, for it is vain ;]  
21b In peace the spoiler shall come upon him,  
22 He shall despair of returning from the darkness ;  
He is reserved for the sword,  
23 Destined as food for the vultures ;  
He knoweth that his ruin is assured,  
The day of darkness terrifieth him,  
24 Distress and anguish overpower him,  
Like a king ready for the fray.  
25 Because he hath stretched out his hand against God,  
And biddeth defiance to the Almighty,

- 26 He runneth against Him insolently,  
 With the thick bosses of his shields,  
 27 Because he hath covered his face with fatness,  
 And put collops of fat upon his loins,  
 28 And dwelleth in cities that were destroyed,  
 In houses which were depopulated,  
 Which are destined to be ruins,  
 29 He shall not be rich, and his wealth shall not endure,  
 He shall not spread out a night-lodge in the land.  
 30 He shall not depart from the darkness,  
 His shoots a flame shall wither up,  
 And his sprouts shall be swept away by the wind ;  
 32 His branches shall wither before their time,  
 His boughs shall not be green ;  
 33 He shall shed his immature fruit like the vine,  
 And shall cast his bloom like the olive ;  
 34 For the company of the wicked shall be barren,  
 And a fire shall consume the tents of bribery ;  
 25 They conceive mischief, and bring forth trouble,  
 And their womb prepareth deceit.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

- xv. 18b. 1. אֲבוֹתָם. M T מֵאֲבוֹתָם. 22b. 1. וְצִפּוֹן. M T וְצִפּוֹן.  
 23a. 1. הַנֶּגֶד הוּא לֶלֶחֶם אֵיהָ (G.). M T הַנֶּגֶד הוּא לֶלֶחֶם אֵיהָ.  
 23b. 1. פִּידוֹ (G.). M T בִּידוֹ. 24a. 1. יִבְעֶתְהוּ (G. Syr. Vulg.).  
 M T יִבְעֶתְהוּ. Connect with 23b. 1. תִּתְקַפְּהוּ. M T תִּתְקַפְּהוּ.  
 28c. 1. הַתַּעֲתָדוֹ לְזָרִים (cf. G.) ? M T הַתַּעֲתָדוֹ לְגִלִּים.  
 29b. 1. מְלוֹן (cf. Jer. ix. 1) or מְלוֹנָה (Is. i. 8; xxiv. 20). M T  
 מְנָלָם. 30c. 1. וַיִּסְעֶר (cf. G.). M T וַיִּסּוֹר. 1. פָּרְחוּ (G.).  
 M T פָּיו. 31a. 1. בְּשִׂיאוֹ (cf. xx. 6a). M T בְּשִׁנּוֹ (Qeri בְּשִׂיאוֹ).  
 31b. 1. זְמֹרְתוֹ (G.). M T תְּמֹרְתוֹ. תְּהִיָּה... יֵאֱמִין.  
 transp. post 21a. 32a. 1. תִּמְלָל (G. Vulg. Syr.). M T תִּמְלָא.  
 34b. 1. שִׁחַר ? M T שִׁחַר.

## COMMENTARY.

2-6. Job's speeches are not only futile but irreverent. His language reflects a rebellious disposition, and this obstinacy which finds expression in his speeches will lead to his ruin.

2. Job has boasted of his superior wisdom (xiii. 2) ; but his language is not that of a wise man. He has said nothing which disproves their main contention : that his sufferings are the consequence of sins of ignorance or inadvertence. *Vain knowledge*, lit. 'knowledge of wind.' His mind is full of frivolous nonsense, which has nothing to do with the question. The 'east wind' is specially mentioned because it best symbolises the passionate and offensive speeches of Job.

4. His words are worse than useless, they are irreverent. Eliphaz had warned Job that suffering such as his should be accepted with humility and resignation as a warning to repentance, and not in a spirit of rebellion (v. 1ff). But Job has taken the course against which he had been warned. Cf. xxxvi. 8-12 (Elihu). *Piety*, lit. 'fear,' i.e. fear of God. *Reverence*, lit. 'meditation,' the reverence to be shown to God by submission to His will. Job has refused to accept 'the chastening of the Almighty' (v. 17).

5. His language reflects his rebellious disposition. He has preferred the language of the 'crafty' to that of the humble (cf. v. 12-15).

6. This rebellious language will lead to his condemnation as a sinner. Even though his sins were not deliberate, he now becomes a sinner by refusal to repent. Compare Elihu's speech, xxxvi. 12ff.

7-11. Is Job so wise that he can reject not only the wisdom of the ancients, but even the wisdom of God Himself ?

7. Job claims that because he himself knows of no sin which could deserve chastisement, there is nothing more to be said. *The first of mankind*. He has said : 'In old age is wisdom' (xii. 12) ; as he claims superior wisdom he must be very old indeed ! Is he perchance the first man created ? Or was he born even before all other created things ? The second part of the verse is supposed by many to allude to the preexistence of Wisdom (Prov. viii. 22-31).

8. Or is he perchance one who is privileged to assist at God's heavenly council, at which the creation of the universe was planned, and the daily course of events determined ? Cf. xxxvii. 8 ; xxxviii. 4-15, 21, 31-32). *Confined*, lit. 'drawn.' Wisdom is communicated to man in limited measure, has Job received it in its entirety ?

9. In actual fact, they can lay claim to greater wisdom than he possesses.

10. For there are among them men even older than Job's father, and therefore, according to Job's own criterion (xii. 12), so much wiser. Eliphaz is probably referring to himself.

11. He even set his own wisdom above God's; for he has rejected God's warning to repent. *The consolations of God* has reference, not to the revelation received by Eliphaz (iv. 17-20), for Job has accepted this (ix. 2), but to God's warning contained in his sufferings. According to Elihu, this is God's method of communicating His will to men (xxxiii. 18-22). This warning dealt gently with Job, because suffering in such circumstances is a blessing and not a curse (v. 17).

12-16. Job's resentment against God is without justification; for no man is without sin (*cf.* v. 1ff; xi. 12; xxxvi. 13-14).

12. Like the fool described by Eliphaz (v. 2), Job has met suffering with resentment. *Thy eyes roll.* The word occurs only here, and is usually associated with a root found in Syriac meaning 'to wink.' The rolling or winking of the eyes is a sign of passion or hostility (*cf.* xvi. 9c; Ps. xxxv. 19). But the Greek 'Why are thy eyes *lofty*?' which differs only slightly, may be original. (*cf.* Ps. ci. 5; cxxxi. 1, and the expression 'lowly of eyes' xxii. 29).

13. *Thy passion*, lit. 'thy spirit' (*cf.* vi. 26b; Jud. viii. 3; Prov. xvi. 32). *Lettest words*, i.e. against God (to be supplied from 13a).

14. Eliphaz repeats the doctrine revealed to him in his vision (iv. 12-21).

15. *Holy Ones*, the angels (*cf.* iv. 18; v. 1). The *heavens* are the natural heavens, not the angels. In xxv. 5, 'the stars' replaces 'the heavens.' *Cf.* Ex. xxiv. 10, where the heavens symbolise the perfection of beauty.

16. Man is not only impure by nature, but he has a natural tendency to sin. *Cf.* v. 7; xi. 12; xxxiv. 7. In the last passage, Elihu applies the words to Job himself.

17-21a. Both experience and tradition teach us that the wicked, far from being happy as Job alleges, is in a state of continual anxiety. The reason is given in the following strophe.

17. *Cf.* iv. 8; v. 3, where Eliphaz similarly argues from his own experience.

18-19. Eliphaz, like Bildad (viii. 8), presents his view as that handed down by the tradition of the fathers. It goes back to a time when the purity of the doctrine had not been contaminated by foreign influences. In 18b, the Hebrew reading 'And they concealed not from their fathers' is obviously wrong. The Greek, by omitting the preposition, makes 'fathers' subject.

20-21a. Here Eliphaz begins the exposition of the traditional doctrine on the fate of the wicked. *He is in anxiety.* The wicked man, however prosperous he be, is not happy. The shadow of the doom which is reserved for him darkens his whole life, and leaves him without a moment of happiness. *During the number of years.* This clause is usually translated (*cf.* Versions): 'And few are the years laid up for the tyrant.' But this would be true of all men (xiv. 1ff). The sense 'few are the years' would have

been expressed differently (*cf.* xvi. 22). For the meaning 'all the years' *cf.* xxxi. 37. As 21a is the equivalent of 20b, and 20c of 20a, it follows that the clauses should be written as two couplets rather than a triplet.

31, 21b-24. For, despite his prosperity, sudden disaster will reduce him to poverty, and he himself will die a miserable death. Knowing this, he is a prey to intense fear and anxiety.

31. This verse should probably be inserted here (see below). It forms a fitting introduction to the strophe. Compare the similar introduction in xx. 17: 'Let him not look upon rivers of oil.' His prosperity is not secure.

21b-22a. For a sudden disaster, like the attack of a powerful enemy, will reduce him to poverty from which he will never recover. *In peace*, i.e. in the very peak of his prosperity, when he seems secure. Bildad (xviii. 12) and Sophar (xx. 11) likewise speak of the sudden downfall of the wicked. *He shall despair*, lit. 'he shall not believe' (*cf.* xxiv. 22; Deut. xxviii. 66; Ps. xxvii. 13). *Darkness*, i.e. his life will be changed to sadness and misery, and he will have no hope of relief.

22b-23a. Not only his property, but also his life is in jeopardy. He is destined to die a violent death, and to lie unburied to be devoured by vultures. *Cf.* xviii. 11ff; xx. 24ff. *Reserved*. The Heb. has 'seen' or 'spied out.' But a trifling alteration gives the word 'hidden' or 'reserved' which is generally adopted. For the second part of the verse the Heb. has 'He wandereth about for bread, where is it?' But the Greek has preserved the correct text. The difference is only in the vowel points. With the whole verse compare Is. xiv. 19.

23b-c. It is his knowledge that this disaster may come at any moment that causes the wicked man's anxiety (20-21a). The *day of darkness* or disaster which is coming fills him with terror. The verbs in this and the next verse should be translated by the present. Eliphaz is speaking of the terror which he *already* feels in the days of his prosperity.

24. *Cf.* 'Terrors shall trample on him like a king' (xviii. 14).

25-30a. The loss of his prosperity will be complete. Because of his defiance of God, and his oppression of his fellow-men, the day will come when he will not possess even a wretched night-lodge in the land.

25. Eliphaz is referring in particular to the types of the wicked mentioned by Job—the robbers, men who provoke God, and those who make might their God (xii. 6). *Cf.* xxi. 15-16, where the wicked are described as rebels against God. Verses 25-26 refer to his rebellion against God, 27-28 to his sins against his fellow-men.

26. *Insolently*, lit. 'with neck' (*cf.* Ps. lxxv. 6). In the second clause the wicked is described as the head of an army warring against God.

27. His oppression of his fellow-men. He has grown fat by means of wealth unjustly acquired. Compare the description of the wicked in Ps. lxxiii. 4: 'Sound and fat is their body' (cf. Jer. v. 28).

28. Here he is represented as a conqueror who has built up a kingdom on the ruins of the cities he has destroyed, or as an oppressor who enlarged his estates by dispossessing the poor (cf. Is. v. 8ff). *Cities . . . houses*. According to Peters and others, the reference is to the rebuilding of cities and houses destroyed by the judgment of God, and therefore accursed. But comparison with the parallel passages (cf. xx. 19-21) shows clearly that there is question of oppression. Cf. '(kings) who had built up waste places for themselves' (iii. 14). *Which are destined to be ruins*. The houses he has built on the ruins 'of the hovels of the poor' (xx. 19) will in turn be destroyed. The Greek takes this clause with the following, and has a somewhat different reading: 'What he hath prepared others shall take away' (cf. xxvii. 17: 'He may prepare, but the just shall put it on'). This may be a free translation of a text which differs but slightly from the Hebrew: 'what he hath prepared for himself shall be *for strangers*,' and may well be the correct text.

29. This verse is the apodosis of the sentence begun in 25. In the Greek the apodosis begins in 28c (see above). His wealth will not endure. Cf. xviii. 5-6; xx. 11, 17-21; xxvii. 16ff. *A night-lodge*. The Hebrew word occurs only here, and no satisfactory explanation of it has been given. The Greek has 'shadow,' which is probably only a guess based on the metaphor of the tree in 30-33. The meaning is indicated by the parallel passages viii. 18, xviii. 17, xx. 8-10. His property will vanish so completely that even his name will be forgotten in the place. I suggest that the word is a corruption of the word for 'hut' or 'night-lodge' (Jer. ix. 1), a flimsy structure set up by travellers for the night. It forms a striking contrast to the immense estates and splendid mansions which he owned in the days of his prosperity.

30-33. He will leave no posterity. He will be like a tree whose shoots are blasted, whose branches wither, whose unripe fruit is cast off. Cf. viii. 16-18; xviii. 16-19; xx. 26.

30. The first clause is regarded by many as a variant of 22a. But it is quite appropriate here. His ruin will be complete (29), and there will be no hope of recovery (30a), for he will be like a tree destroyed with no hope of reviving (30b-33). Bildad uses a similar figure in viii. 6, 16 and xviii. 16. The 'shoots' and 'sprouts' refer to his family, which will perish with him (cf. xviii. 19; xx. 26). *His sprouts*. So the Greek, which is generally accepted. The Hebrew has 'the wind of His (God's) mouth.'

31. This verse (with the exception of the last word, which is to be joined to verse 32) is certainly out of place. It interrupts the metaphor of the tree which begins in 30b and continues in 32-33. Beer, Budde, and Duhm regard it as a later addition.



It should probably be placed before 21b. *In his greatness.* Hebrew has 'in vanity.' But the form is suspicious, and the word is repeated in 31b. Dhorme's suggestion to read the word 'height' = greatness or prosperity, as in xx. 6a, is probably right.

32. He himself will perish prematurely. Cf. viii. 11-13; xx. 11; xxvii. 20-21. The 'branch' and 'bough' are the parent tree, as opposed to the young shoots, and therefore symbolise the wicked man himself.

33. He will not reach his full life's span. He will be like the vine or the olive blasted before the fruit is fully ripe. Cf. Is. xviii. 5.

34. Conclusion. *Tents of bribery*, i.e. of those who have accumulated wealth by corruption in the law courts. A slight emendation would give us the word for 'brigand,' 'robber,' which might be an allusion to Job's statement that 'the tents of robbers are in security' (xii. 6).

35. Cf. iv. 8. *Prepareth deceit*, i.e. the sequel will not be in accordance with their plans. Cf. Ps. vii. 14: 'He hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood' (i.e. disappointment).

## JOB'S REPLY TO ELIPHAZ, xvi.-xvii.

*Argument.* The Speech consists of two parts : the first dealing with the unjust accusation of which he is the victim, the second with his unavailing plea to God to defend him against the calumnies of his friends.

a) The calumnies of his friends. If their positions were reversed, he would not heap words of abuse upon them in their misery ; he would speak words of help and encouragement, and would share their grief (2-6). But they, his bosom-friends, from whom he expected help and sympathy, have become enemies and accusers, and have loaded him with insults, and God permits them to do so, although his prayer for redress deserves to be heard (7-11, 17). For his sufferings are due, not to his sins, but to the arbitrary action of God. He deprived him of his prosperity, and afflicted him with infirmity, and reduced him to his present abject state (12-16).

b) His cry for redress is already in heaven appealing to God on his behalf, that his innocence may be vindicated, and his happiness restored before death supervenes (18-xvii. 1). This cry is an appeal to God against the calumnies of his friends ; but, alas, God has decreed to let him continue in his misery (2-7). Therefore all talk of a happy future is nothing but hollow mockery ; for when he is dead, what hope of happiness is there ? (10-16).

*Strophic arrangement : 6 : 7 : 6.*

xvi. 1 And Job answered and said :

- 2 I have heard many things like these,  
    Troublesome comforters are ye all !
- 3 Will vain words have an end ?  
    Or what aggrieveth thee, that thou shouldst  
    answer ?
- 4 I also could talk like you,  
    If your soul were in my soul's stead ;  
    Would I oppress you with words ?  
    Or shake my head at you ?
- 5 I would strengthen you with my mouth,  
    And would [not] stint the solace of my lips ;
- 6 If I spoke, my grief would not be restrained,  
    If I desisted, it would not depart from me.

7 But now my bosom-friend hath grieved me,  
And my whole company hath seized me ;  
8 He hath become a witness, and riseth up against me,  
My traducer, that giveth testimony against me ;  
9 His wrath hath rent him, and he assaileth me,  
He gnasheth his teeth against me ;  
My adversaries glare at me,  
10 They open their mouths against me ;  
They have smitten me on the cheek with scorn,  
They have their way against me altogether.  
11 God delivereth me up to an unjust man,  
And into the hands of the wicked He casteth me,  
[17 Although there is no violence in my hand,  
And my prayer is pure.]

12 I was at ease, and He broke me asunder,  
He took me by the neck, and dashed me to pieces ;  
And He set me up for His mark,  
13 His missiles encompass me round about ;  
He cleaveth my reins and spareth not,  
He poureth out my gall upon the ground ;  
14 He breaketh me with breach upon breach,  
He runneth against me like a warrior ;  
15 I have sewn sackcloth on my skin,  
And thrust my horn into the dust,  
16 And my face is inflamed with weeping,  
And upon my eyelids is deep gloom.

18 O earth, cover not my blood,  
And let my cry have no resting-place !  
19 Even now, behold my witness is in heaven,  
And that which giveth testimony for me is on  
high ;  
20 My cry unto God is my advocate,  
[Before Him] doth mine eye shed tears,  
21 And it pleadeth for a man with God,  
As a son of man for his fellow,

[xvii. 9 That the just man may hold his way,  
And one that is clean of heart may wax  
strong ;]

22 For a few years will come,  
And I shall go a way whence I shall not  
return ;

1 My spirit shall be destroyed,  
My days spent,  
The grave my lot.

2 “ Verily, mockers are with me,  
And in their obduracy doth mine eye abide ;

3 Appoint, I pray, my surety with Thee,  
Who is he that will go bail for me ?

4 For Thou hast hidden their heart from insight,  
Therefore Thou wilt not exalt them.”

5 As one inviteth friends to partake,  
While the eyes of his children languish,

6 So hath He made me a byword of the peoples,  
As one who is spit upon must I be ;

7 And mine eye is grown dim with anguish,  
And my limbs are all like a shadow.

10 But turn ye all, and come now,  
And I shall not find a wise man among you !

11 My days have passed away,  
My plans are plucked out,  
The desires of my heart !

12 “ He will change night into day,  
And the light is near which dispelleth the dark-  
ness ”—

13 If I must look to Sheol as my home,  
If I must spread my couch in Darkness,

14 If I must call corruption ‘ my father,’  
And the maggot ‘ my mother ’ and ‘ my sister,’

15 Where then is my hope ?  
And my happiness who can descry it ?

16 Will they descend with me to Sheol ?  
Shall we go down together to the pit ?

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xvi. 4a. 1. הַגִּם (ה haplogr.). 4c. 1. אַכְבִּירָה (cf. Neh. v. 15).  
 M T אַחְבִּירָה. 5b. 1. לֹא אֶחָשֶׁךְ (G. Syr.). M T יֶחֱשֶׁךְ. 7a.  
 1. אִישׁ סוּרִי. M T הַשְׁמוֹת. 8a. transp. וְתַקְמָטִנִי to 7b.  
 8b. 1. בְּחָשִׁי (Syr. Vulg.). M T בְּחָשִׁי. 9a. 1. טָרְפוּ (cf. xviii. 4).  
 M T טָרַף. 9c. 1. יִלְטְשׁוּ עֵינֵיהֶם (Syr. Sym.). M T  
 צָרִי יִלְטְשׁ עֵינָיו. 11a. 1. עוֹל (G. Targ. Syr. Vulg.). M T  
 עוֹלִיל. 17. transp. post 11. 20a. 1. מְלִיצִי (cf. G.). M T מְלִיצִי.  
 1. רָעִי (G.). M T רָעִי. 20b. Connect אֶל-אֱלֹהִים with 19a (G.).  
 Insert לְפָנָיו (G.). xvii. 2a. 1. חֲתָלִים. M T חֲתָלִים. 3a.  
 1. עֲרֵבְנִי. M T עֲרֵבְנִי. 4b. 1. תְּרִימִם. M T תְּרִימִם.  
 6a. 1. לְמִשַּׁל. M T לְמִשַּׁל. 7b. 1. כָּלָם? M T כָּלָם. 8a. 1.  
 יִשְׁמָחוּ (Ehrlich. cf. xxii. 19). M T יִשְׁמָחוּ. 8. transp. post  
 xviii. 20. 9. transp. post xvi. 21. 12a. 1. יִשִּׁים ו. M T יִשִּׁימוּ.  
 12b. 1. מִפְּנֵה (cf. Soph. iii. 15). M T מִפְּנֵי. 15b. 1. טוֹבֵתִי  
 (G.). M T תִּקְוֹתִי (cf. 15a). 16a. 1. הָעֶמְרִי or הַבִּידִי (G.). M T  
 בִּידִי. 16b. 1. נִחַת (G.). M T נִחַת.

## COMMENTARY.

2-6. Nothing but empty words where he had reason to expect sympathy and help! If their positions were reversed, his words would help and not wound, his feelings would be those of sympathy and not contempt. Speaking or silent, he would share their grief.

2. This theory of retribution is perfectly familiar to Job (*cf.* xii. 3; xiii. 1); but his conscience tells him that it does not meet his case—their words are mere wind. As in his first reply to Eliphaz (vi. 15-27), he blames his friends because, instead of helping him in his trouble, they treat him harshly. They are 'comforters of trouble,' i.e. men who cause annoyance instead of giving help.

3. Job retorts Eliphaz's description of his own speeches (xv. 1). But he is particularly pained that Eliphaz above all should take sides against him. In the following strophe he singles out one of the friends (Eliphaz) as specially blameworthy. Note the alteration of singular and plural in 3-4, 7, 9-11.

4. If their positions were reversed, Job could take up the same attitude towards them; but, as they themselves admit (iv. 3-4; xxvi. 2-4), such has not been his practice in similar cases in the past.

4c-d. This and the following verses are usually taken as what Job could do if they were in the same plight as he is now. He too could play the part of the unctuous moralist with language as empty as theirs. But it is difficult to attach this meaning to verse 5, and still more to verse 6. There is an obvious contrast between 4c and 5a, and between 4d and 5b, and if the four clauses be taken affirmatively, the statements are contradictory. The clauses in 4c-d must be taken interrogatively, i.e. as equivalent to negative statements: he would not use words of abuse (4c) but words of help (5a), he would not mock (4d), he would console (5b). Compare vi. 15-27, where he complains of their lack of sympathy and help. *Would I oppress you.* The Hebrew word means 'join together.' Some take this to mean: 'I would join words together against you.' Others derive the verb from an Arabic root 'to be beautiful': 'I could speak beautifully against you' (Peters). Dhorme emends the text to 'I could *multiply* words against you.' All these views are based on the assumption that the clauses are positive statements. We expect the opposite of 'strengthen' (5a). Now, in xix. 2, Job accuses them of '*crushing* him with words,' and the change of a letter gives this result. The word suggested (lit. 'make heavy') is used in this sense in Neh. v. 15. *Shake my head.* According to the usual view which takes the clause as an affirmative statement, this must be taken in the sense of 'show sympathy': I could show the same formal signs of sympathy. But the expression always signifies mockery, *never* sympathy. Job's complaint is that they

have not shown sympathy (vi. 15-22). The clause is interrogative, and equivalent to a negative statement.

5. No, he would not treat them as they are treating him. *I would strengthen*. The clause is not ironical—'I could give the same lip-comfort that you are now giving.' Job has maintained that such comforting words were expected of friends, and attributed his own violent language to the lack of them (vi. 14). In the past, it was his custom to help others in this way (iv. 3-4; xxvi. 2-4). The clause contrasts with 4c. *I would not stint*. Heb. has 'And the movement of my lips would restrain.' If this is correct, it must mean that Job's words would restrain them from giving way to impatience (cf. vi. 13-14). Nevertheless, most critics follow the Greek reading, which inserts the negative, and reads the first person of the verb. *Solace*, lit. 'movement.' In ii, 11, the verb means 'to console,' and 'solace' or 'consolation' is the meaning of the noun here. Cf. 4d.

6. Commentators generally hold that in this verse Job returns to the consideration of his own case: 'neither speech nor silence will rid me of my pain.' But the opening words of verse 7 ('but now') indicate that only there does he begin to deal with his own case. This verse continues to deal with the hypothetical case of his friends. The real reason why critics take it to refer to Job's case, is that it is impossible to fit it in with 4-5 as usually understood. But in the interpretation of these verses given above this difficulty is removed. Job's words would be words of *real* comfort; he would feel sympathy for them while he spoke, and even after he had finished speaking his sorrow would remain. *It would not depart*, lit. 'what goeth from me?' (cf. 1 K. xii. 16; 2 S. xx. 1).

7-11, 17. How different their treatment of him! Eliphaz is his accuser, and his enemy; the others mock and buffet him in his misery. And God has delivered him up to their insults, and refused to answer his prayer for redress.

7. The text of this verse is certainly corrupt. Heb. 'And now he hath grieved me, and thou hast appalled all my company.' The change of person from the third to the second and back to the third (8), the irregularity of the metre, and the obscurity of the passage all indicate that there is corruption. Bickell (cf. Dhorme, Peters) is probably right in adding the first word of verse 8 to 7b: 'All my (or his) company seize (or seized) me.' This forms a good introduction to what follows.

In the first clause the chief difficulty is to find a subject for the first verb. Vulg. inserts 'my grief' from verse 6; many modern critics take 'God' as the subject; but God enters only in verse 11. As the second person is completely out of place, it is an obvious suggestion that the subject is concealed in the second verb. Dhorme merely by a change of pointing translates 'the envious one' (cf. Arabic); but the existence of the word in Hebrew is very doubtful, and in the present case it is unsuitable, for, as we shall see, it refers to Eliphaz. The context suggests a better alternative. In the following verses there is reference to an individual (8-9, 11a) and to a group (10, 11b) as Job's

assailants.' It is clear from xviii. 3b that Bildad takes the reference to be to himself and his companions, and Eliphaz has been singled out by Job in 3b above. The individual and the group are Eliphaz and the two other friends. The latter are included in 'my whole company' (7b), and the subject of 7a is Eliphaz. I suggest that the word in dispute is a corruption of 'bosom-friend' (lit. 'man of my council.' Cf. xix. 19, where 'men of my council' includes all three, and Ps. cxl. 1, where 'council' and 'company' are parallel as here). The general sense of the first two strophes confirms this hypothesis; for there is a contrast between what he would do for them (2-6) and what they now do to him (7-11). *Hath seized me*, i.e. as a miscreant to be brought before the tribunal of the judge. The word should probably be placed at the beginning of 7b (Bickell places it at the end).

8. Eliphaz, instead of standing in his defence, has become his accuser, and even bears false witness against him (cf. xiii. 46. -11) *Traducer*. This translation (and not 'my leanness' nor 'my falsehood') is indicated by the parallelism, and is that given by Greek and Vulg.

9a-b. He has become his enemy. Like a wild beast, he is carried away by ungovernable wrath, and attacks his former friend. Cf. vi. 21, 27; xix. 19. In his reply Bildad makes a spirited protest against this comparison. *Hath rent him*. The Hebrew omits the object, and this has led to different interpretations. Commentators generally understand 'me' as the object (cf. Syr. Vulg.). But then the rending would precede the attack. Dhorme dispenses with an object by translating 'has found a prey,' but the parallel which he cites for this meaning is the result of corruption (Am. i. 11. Cf. Syr. Vulg.). Bildad says that Job had compared them to a beast, 'who rendeth himself.' We should therefore insert 'him,' which was dropped because of the occurrence of the same letter in the next word.

9c-10a. The other two friends glare at him, and treat him with mockery and violence. *My adversaries*. It improves the symmetry of the verses if we read the plural here with Syriac and Sym. They are the 'company' to whom he referred in 7b. *Glare*, lit. 'sharpen their eyes.' Cf. Ps. xxii. 18. *Opened their mouth*, to indicate contempt (cf. Ps. xxii. 8; 1 Sam. ii. 1).

10b-c. They have even stooped to violence. Smiting on the cheek was the extreme form of insult (cf. Ps. iii. 8; Lam. iii. 30; Mich. iv. 14). *They have their way*, lit. 'they fill themselves,' i.e. they are permitted to insult me without hindrance. Cf. 'They prevail, there is none to restrain them' (xxx. 13). There is no foundation for the translation 'they mass themselves,' and, even if there were, it is not suitable here. There is question of only three assailants, and the reference to a massed attack should have come earlier. Cf. xix. 22b.

11. They can insult him without hindrance, because God has delivered him up to them, and refuses to intervene on his behalf (cf. xix. 7; xxx. 13). The 'unjust man' is Eliphaz, who has



borne false witness against him (8), the 'wicked' are the other two who persecute him (9-10).

Verse 17 should probably be inserted here. He has appealed to God against the calumnies of his friends, but his appeal is not heard, and so they are allowed to persecute him as they wish.

12-16. His trouble is the result, not of his sins, but of the arbitrary action of God. First, He took away his prosperity, then He assailed his person, and reduced him to his present state of humiliation and sorrow. For the sequence of thought *cf.* xix. 5-6; xxx. 14b-19.

12. The reference is to the first series of calamities (i. 13ff. *cf.* xxx. 15). *He took me by the neck*, *cf.* xxx. 18-19.

12c-13. Job's second calamity (ii. 7ff, xxx. 17). *His mark*, *cf.* vii. 20. God's arrows have wounded his whole body, and have penetrated his vital organs. *Cf.* 'The arrows of the Almighty are within me' (vi. 14), and Sophar's account of God's assault on the wicked (xx. 24-25).

14. But though he is already mortally wounded, God continues to inflict wound after wound, charging against him like a frenzied warrior (*cf.* xix. 11-12; xxx. 18-19).

15. Against such an opponent, Job must go down to defeat. *I have sewn* means, simply, 'I have put on' sackcloth, the garb of mourning. *I have thrust etc.* The opposite expression 'to exalt the horn' signifies joy or triumph, so 'to thrust the horn into the dust' is to acknowledge defeat. *Cf.* 'He hurled me to the dust, and I am become like dust and ashes' (xxx. 19).

16. His life is one of unrelieved sorrow. *Cf.* xvii. 7, *deep gloom*. The eyes are bright with joy, darkened with sorrow (Prov. xxix. 13; Ps. xiii. 4; xix. 9).

17. He has begged God to intervene to refute the calumnies of his opponents, but God has rejected his appeal. God will not hear the prayer of one whose hands are stained with injustice (xi. 14); but Job's hands are pure (xxxi. 7), and therefore his prayer should be heard. As Job's appeal both here and in his next speech (xix) is against the injustice of his friends, this verse probably belongs to the preceding strophe. It implies that their attacks persist despite his appeal, and it forms the natural sequence to verse 11. It is not true to say that God afflicted him in the first instance (12-16) despite his appeal.

18-xvii. 1. His cry for redress against the unjust attacks of his friends has already reached the heavens to plead with God on his behalf, that his innocence be vindicated, and he be restored to happiness before it is too late.

18. Job feels that his death is near. His vital organs have been pierced (13), and his life-blood is being poured out. He appeals to the earth not to hinder its appeal for the vindication of his name. *Cover not my blood*. Innocent blood cried out to heaven for vengeance (Gen. iv. 11-10). According to Ezechiel, the earth might stifle the cry for redress by covering up the blood (Ezech.

xxiv. 7-8). *No resting place*, lit. no place,' i.e. no permanent abode in the earth.

19. But this appeal for redress will not be delayed until he is dead. It has already begun. Already, *even now*, that cry has reached the heavens, where it is pleading his cause. *My witness*. This is generally taken to refer to God: He is the witness of his innocence, and will one day intervene to vindicate him (*cf.* xix. 25). But if this were the meaning, it would involve a good deal of confusion. For God would be at the same time witness on his behalf and judge (21). Critics seem to have no objection to this confusion, and speak of the whole passage as 'an appeal to God against God.' But the true explanation is much simpler. The writer is using the figure, which is so frequent in the Psalms, of prayer personified, and taking the role of advocate before God (*cf.* Ps. lxxix. 11; lxxxiii. 3; cix. 169; cxli. 2; Lam. i. 22). In a similar manner 'sin' is often represented as bearing witness against a man (Is. lix. 12; Jer. xiv. 7). In the preceding verse, Job's 'cry' is likewise personified. He called upon the earth to give it freedom to ascend to plead before God. In this verse, he states that it has already arrived before the throne of God, if only God would hear it.

20. This verse has given rise to two different interpretations. a) The usual interpretation is 'My friends are my scorers, unto God doth mine eye shed tears.' b) But the first word might also mean 'interpreters,' and the second 'cry,' hence 'My cry is my interpreter.' The Greek text is superior to the Hebrew both in meaning and metrical structure: 'Let my cry reach unto God, before Him doth mine eye shed tears.' It is not necessary to suppose that the Greek 'reach' represents a different reading; it may be a free translation of the word 'interpreter.' The insertion of 'before Him' is recommended by the metre. Our preference will depend on the meaning of the first word—'scorers' or 'interpreters.' There are two objections to the former interpretation: a) the word never actually means 'scorers'; another form of the root (not a participle) is used for the noun; and b) the verb 'scorn' is always used in a special sense, viz., to scoff at sacred things, religion, piety, etc., and therefore not applicable to the three friends of Job. In xxxiii. 22 the word certainly means 'interpreter,' and this meaning is supported by the context here. *Mine eye shed tears*. His tears, like his cry, are his advocate. *Cf.* 'Thou hast set my tears in Thy sight' (Ps. lvi. 9); 'Let the sighing of the prisoner come before Thee' (Ps. lxxix. 11).

21. If the subject is God, as is usually assumed, we have the same difficulty as that referred to above in verse 19, viz. God is at once advocate and judge. But the subject is the 'cry' of verse 20. The idea of 'an appeal to God against God' or of 'God pleading against Himself on man's behalf,' however striking or poetical it may be, has no place in Job's argument. Job's cry is pleading for him before God as one man might plead for another before a human judge. *As a son of man*. The Hebrew has 'and a son of man.' But the 'and' is the 'and' of

comparison, and it is not necessary to change the reading. The usually accepted emendation '*as between* a son of man' is based on a misunderstanding. The verb does not mean here 'to act as arbiter between' (cf. ix. 33), but 'to argue' or 'to plead' as witness or advocate (xiii. 3, 15; 15; xv. 3). The preposition both in 21a and 21b means 'on behalf of.'

xvii. 9. For the transfer of this verse see below. His plea is that God declare him innocent of the charges brought against him by his friends, and that he be restored to his position of prosperity.

22. The case is urgent, for soon Job will be no more. Cf. xiii. 19. *I shall not return.* Cf. vii. 10; x. 21; xiv. 18ff. All hope of happiness ends with death.

xxvii. 1. The Hebrew of this verse consists of three short lines (two accents). This unusual metre is considered by some critics a ground of suspicion, and various emendations have been proposed, with a view to restoring the normal metrical structure. But none of these inspires any confidence, and it is safer to accept the text as it stands with Peake, Gray, Dhorme, Peters and others. *My spirit*, i.e. the life-breath, which at death is withdrawn by God (cf. xxxiv. 14; Eccles. xii. 7). With its withdrawal life comes to an end, and nothing is left but the grave.

2-7. Job's prayer: 'I am beset by mockers, who obstinately persist in accusing me; appoint me an angel as my advocate in heaven, for their accusations are false, and surely You will not let them triumph.' But God is indifferent to the claims of the just, and so Job must continue to be the object of mockery, and suffer agony of mind and body.

2. In the preceding strophe, Job spoke of his 'cry' pleading for him before the throne of God. This and the following verses give the substance of that 'cry' or prayer; it is a prayer to be defended against the unjust accusations of his friends. *Mockers.* The Hebrew has the abstract 'mockery'; Targum has 'mockers' and an antecedent is necessary for the suffixes in 2b and 4. The 'mockers' are his three friends whose hostility has been described in xvi. 6-11. *Their obduracy.* The Versions present considerable variety: 'bitterness' (Vulg.), 'retribution' (Targ.). Other readings have been suggested by critics; but it is doubtful if the Hebrew can be improved upon. The reference is to their obstinate refusal to regard him as innocent. While he expected sympathy, he receives only stony looks of indifference or hostility.

3. Since he cannot appear before God in person, let God appoint a representative to defend him in his absence. *My surety.* The text has the imperative 'be my surety,' but it is generally agreed that the word should be read as a noun; an object to 'appoint' is required. Most critics, following Reiske, read 'my pledge': 'set down or appoint *my pledge* with Thee.' But the parallel clause shows that there is question of a person to appear on his behalf. Cf. Prov. vi. 1; xi. 15; xvii. 18; xxii. 26, where the same words are used in parallel clauses. We should therefore read the participle with suffix. *With Thee.* There is an implied

contrast with 'with me' (2), and hence Job probably means that a member of the heavenly court be appointed his advocate. Elihu speaks of the angels acting in this capacity (xxxiii. 23-24, cf. v. 1). *Who is he, etc.* Let any one, whoever he be, go bail for me (cf. xiii. 19; xxxi. 35).

4. His friends are wrongly accusing him. God has not endowed them with the insight by which they could know the truth. Surely He will not let them triumph. Compare the frequency of the prayer 'Thou wilt not let my enemy triumph over me' or the equivalent, in the Psalms (cf. xiii. 3, 5; xxi. 9; xxx. 2; xxxviii. 17; xli. 12).

5. Most critics make the mistake of taking this verse with the preceding, and try to apply the proverb to the conduct of the friends. But their interpretations differ widely. a) The friends have no understanding, but they invite Job to partake of their wisdom while they have not enough for themselves (Peake); b) the friends, instead of occupying themselves with the affairs of others, had better attend to their own (Dhorme); c) if a man betray his friends as they have done, his own children will suffer (Gray). But Job does not object to his friends' advice as such; what he objects to, and what has been the subject of his speech hitherto, is the calumnies of his friends. In verses 2-4 he addresses God directly, but in verse 6 God is spoken of in the third person; this must be the case here also. The prayer has ended in verse 4, here he expresses his chagrin that his prayer is not being answered. God permits the wicked to prosper while the just suffer calamity; He is like one who invites friends to a banquet while his own children starve. *Eyes . . . languish*, cf. xi. 20, where the same expression occurs = suffer misfortune.

6. The subject is not expressed, but the meaning is made clear by comparison with xix. 7ff; God leaves his prayer unanswered, and he must continue to suffer. In his next speech he expresses his conviction that God will answer his prayer after he is dead (xix. 23-27). *A byword of the peoples*, of the vulgar mob. *Spit upon*, cf. xxx. 9ff, where he describes in similar terms his treatment by the outcasts of society. Here, of course, he is referring to the insults of his friends (xvi. 6-11).

7. His life is one long agony, and his body is wasting away. *Grown dim*, owing to constant weeping (cf. xvi. 16; Ps. vi. 8). *All*. Many critics, by changing the pointing, read 'are coming to an end' (cf. Vulg.).

8-9. These two verses are very difficult to explain in their present context, and many consider it quite impossible that they can have been uttered by Job. Duhm, Peake, Gray and others regard them as a part of Bildad's speech.

8. Those who retain this verse in its present position are obliged either a) to interpret 'innocent,' 'just,' 'clean of hands' as referring, not to the really just, but to those like the three friends who are just in their own estimation (Peters). In their estimation Job is a sinner and they rejoice in his downfall (8b), and from his fate they take warning to continue in the right

path (9); or b) to transpose the two nouns in 8b, reading: 'The *impious* shall exult over the *innocent* (Merx, Dillmann, Beer). It must be admitted that both interpretations are most unnatural. The verse resembles closely xxii. 9: 'The just see it and are glad, and the innocent laugh them to scorn,' and the resemblance is still more striking if we read 'rejoice' instead of 'are appalled' (Ehrlich). In this form the verse would complete the final strophe of Bildad's speech (xviii. 20-21), where the context is closely parallel to xxii. 20, and where one verse of the strophe is wanting in the present text.

9. It is well nigh impossible to take this verse as referring to anything but the prosperity of the just. *Keep his way*. The way of the wicked is slippery, dark, and beset with obstacles (Ps. xxxv. 6; Prov. ii. 13; iv. 19); the way of the just is smooth and free from obstacles (Is. xxvi. 7; Prov. xv. 19). At present Job's path is beset with obstacles and darkness (xix. 8, cf. xxii. 11), but if his case were heard, he would walk without hindrance, and 'on his path a light would shine' (xxii. 28). *Wax strong*, i.e. prosper. Cf. 'They that hope in Jahweh shall renew their strength' (Is. xl. 31). According to Job, the wicked wax mighty (xxi. 7). Therefore, if the verse belongs to Job's speech it must be in a context in which he is speaking, not of what actually occurs, but of what would occur if God intervened. The verse is an obvious allusion to xvi. 17: God refuses to hear his prayer although his hands are free from guilt; but if God would deign to hear his appeal, he, the just man, would be restored to prosperity. Hence the verse is probably to be inserted in the passage xvi. 18-xvii. 1. Note the contrast between 'his way' and the 'way' (xvi. 22)—the way of life and the way to Sheol.

10-16. It is therefore utter folly on your part to speak of the prospect of happiness. For if my soul is in Sheol, and my body in the grave, what hope of happiness is there?

11. This verse has the same metrical structure as xvii. 1, and has been emended by some critics for the same reason. *Desires of my heart*. This is now regarded as the most probable rendering. The reference is to his desire of happiness, which is now a vain hope. Job is convinced that his sufferings will end only with his death.

12. The first half of this verse is open to no serious objection. It has a parallel in Is. v. 20: 'That make darkness into light, and light into darkness.' But who or what is the subject? Dhorme makes 'plans' (11) the subject: they turn night into day by depriving him of sleep. Peters makes 'the friends' the subject, and reads 'Ye change night into day,' since they are directly addressed in the following verses. It is much better to suppose that Job is alluding to Sophar's speech in which he held forth the prospect of a life 'brighter than the noon-day' instead of his present darkness (xi. 17). The subject is therefore God, and we should read the singular instead of the plural. Compare Job's refutation of similar statements in xxi. 16, 19, 23, 30. The second clause is more difficult. Lit. 'light is near from

the face of the darkness.' As 'from the face of' generally means 'because of,' this does not make sense. Dhorme making a slight change reads 'light is nearer than darkness.' A better sense is obtained if the particle is read as a verb 'which dispelleth.' It is used in this sense in Soph. iii. 15 (*cf.* Gen. xxiii. 31; Is. xl. 3; lvii. 14; lxii. 10; Mal. iii. 1).

13. On the contrary, Job is now convinced that there is now no hope of his recovery, and that his death is near at hand. This verse refers to the destination of the soul, the following to that of the body. *Darkness* i.e. Sheol (*cf.* x. 21-22).

14. His body will be mingled with the dust of the grave, akin to corruption and worms. *Corruption*. The word usually means 'the pit' or 'the grave'; but the parallelism here is in favour of the meaning 'corruption' (*cf.* Ps. xvi. 10; xlix. 10; lv. 24).

15. How then can you say that there is hope of happiness, and that God will change night into day? Instead of 'my hope' in 15b we should probably read 'my good,' as in the Greek.

16. For, of course, there can be no happiness in Sheol. The Hebrew reads: 'They shall go down to *the bars* of Sheol, when once there is rest in the dust.' If the text is correct, the 'bars' are the gates of Sheol (*cf.* Jonah, ii. 7), and the passage must be understood as an ironical reply to the question in verse 15. But the Greek is generally regarded as giving the original reading. His 'hope' and his 'happiness' will not descend with him to Sheol, for in Sheol there is nothing but unending gloom (x. 22).

## BILDAD'S SECOND SPEECH, xviii.

*Argument.* The miserable fate of the wicked. Job has no reason to be angry with them for the tone of their speeches; they have merely applied to him the universal law. Surely, he cannot claim that his case is an exception to the general rule (2-4). The ruin of the wicked is certain (5-7); his position is insecure, and disaster may come at any moment (8-10). He will be assailed by war, famine and disease (11-13), and, in consequence, he will be reduced to poverty, and die a miserable death, and his possessions will pass to strangers (14, 18, 15). His whole race will perish (16-19), and his fate will be a lesson to all men (20-21).

*Strophic arrangement:* 3 : 3 : 3.

xviii. 1 And Bildad the Shuhite answered and said :

2 How long wilt thou put restraint on words ?

Must we attend, but be tardy to speak ?

3 Why are we reckoned as the beast,

Are we likened in thy eyes [to the brute],

4 That rendeth himself in his wrath ?

Must the land be forsaken for thy sake ?

And the rock moved out of its place ?

5 Indeed, the light of the wicked shall be put out,

And the flame of his fire shall not shine ;

6 The light shall be darkened in his tent,

And his lamp above him shall be quenched ;

7 His lusty steps shall be straitened,

And his own counsel shall cause his downfall.

8 For he is thrust into a net by the feet,

And he walketh upon the toils ;

9 A gin shall catch him by the heel,

A snare shall lay hold of him ;

10 A noose for him is hid in the ground,

The trap for him in the path.

11 On every side terrors shall affright him,

And from behind, [missiles] shall discomfit him ;

12 He shall become hungry in his affluence,

And a calamity is ready for his downfall ;

- 13 His skin shall be consumed by disease,  
The first-born of death shall devour his limbs.
- 14 He shall be torn from his tent, where he felt secure,  
And terrors shall trample him like a king ;  
[18 They shall drive him from light into darkness,  
And chase him out of the world ;]
- 15 In his tent shall dwell strangers,  
And brimstone shall be sprinkled on his abode.
- 16 Beneath, his roots shall dry up,  
And above, his branches shall wither ;
- 17 His memory shall perish from the land,  
And he shall have no name in the fields ;
- 19 Nor chit nor child shall he have among his kinsfolk,  
And no survivor in the place of his sojourn.
- 20 At his fate they of the east shall be appalled,  
And they of the west shall shudder ;
- xvii. [8 The upright shall rejoice at this,  
And the innocent shall exult over the impious ;]
- 21 Surely, this was the dwelling of a wicked man,  
This the place of one who knew not God !

## CRITICAL NOTES.

- xviii. 2a. 1. תָּשִׁים (G.). MT תְּשִׁימוֹן. קִנְצִי cf. Ass. *qinsu*, 'a  
fetter.' 2b. 1. נָבִין. MT תְּבִינוּ (ו dittogr.). 1. וְאַחֲרָיו דָּבָר. MT  
וְאַחֲרֵי דָבָר. 3b. 1. נִדְמִינוּ (G.). MT נִטְמִינוּ. Add פָּפְעִיר  
(cf. Dhorme). 7b. 1. וְתִשְׁלִיכֵהוּ (cf. G.). MT וְתִשְׁלִיכֵהוּ.  
11b. Insert רֶבִים (= 'missiles,' xvi. 13, cf. πολλοί). 12a. 1.  
בְּאֵנוּ. MT אֵנוּ (ב haplogr.). 13a. 1. יֹאכֵל בְּדוֹי (or יָכֵל). MT  
יֹאכֵל בְּדִי. 14b. 1. בְּמִלְךָ (Vulg.). MT לְמִלְךָ. 17. transp.  
post 14.



## COMMENTARY.

2-4. Will Job talk for ever, and give us no chance of reply? He compares us to wild beasts because we apply to him principles which are true of all men; does he expect God to make an exception in his case?

2. In the first two verses of the strophe, there is, apart from minor variations, a striking difference between the Greek and Hebrew texts. In the latter, the verbs are in the plural, indicating that Bildad is addressing his two companions, or the bystanders (Dhorme); in the former, Job is addressed throughout. It is evident that the difference is not purely accidental, but that either the Greek or the Hebrew has been systematically altered. Which is original? a) The analogy of the other speeches is in favour of the Greek; in every case the friends address their remarks to Job. b) The unity of the strophe also favours the Greek; for the final verse, even in the Hebrew, is addressed to Job. c) The plural of the Hebrew is unnatural, for there is no reason why Bildad should rebuke his friends for their silence; they have already done their part, and it is now his turn to speak. The hypothesis that Bildad is addressing the bystanders (Dhorme) is without foundation. *Restraint*. The word occurs only here. The Greek and Vulg. took it as a form of the word for 'end': How long before thou make *an end* of words? Modern critics seek the true meaning in Arabic and Assyrian. Some give it the meaning 'snares' (Ar. *Kanasa*): How long wilt thou set *snares* for words? Others trace it to the root *Kinsu*, 'a fetter': How long wilt thou put *restraint* on words? i.e. prevent us from speaking. This gives substantially the same sense as the Greek, and seems to accord better with 2b. *Must we attend, etc.* Neither the Hebrew nor the Greek is quite satisfactory. Heb. 'Attend ye, and afterwards we will speak'; Greek: 'Cease, that we also may speak.' It is probable that Greek is paraphrasing an already corrupt text after the manner of xiii. 13, xxi. 2. Dhorme emends to 'Give ear, that we too may speak.' As Peake remarks, it is the word 'afterwards' that is suspicious. The translation above takes the word as a verb, and makes the other verb first plural instead of second: 'Must we attend (or listen), but be tardy to speak.' Is Job going to speak for ever, and give us no chance to reply?

3. Bildad is alluding to xvi. 9, where Job compared Eliphaz to a ravening beast. The meaning of the second clause is obscure. The verb is found only here, and is usually connected with the Aramaic word 'to stop us (the ears),' hence to be stupid. But it is never used of persons, and if it is correct here, the clause must be regarded as a gloss or out of place. Hence most critics emend to 'we are likened' (cf. Greek). This, however, requires a complement, e.g. 'like the brute' (Dhorme).

4. The first clause is usually connected with the following: 'O thou that rendest thyself in thy wrath.' But it is the friends

themselves who have been compared to a beast (xvi. 9), and there is an obvious allusion to the latter passage. The clause is the natural sequel to 3a or 3b.

4b-c. Must God disturb the established order of the universe for your sake? *Forsaken*, i.e. depopulated. Job has as much right to claim the whole earth for himself, as to demand that God should abrogate His ordinary laws in his favour. He has sinned, and he must not expect to escape suffering. Cf. xxxv. 15.

5-7. Misfortune will certainly overtake the wicked.

5. Light is the symbol of happiness, its extinction is the symbol of tribulation. Here, as the parallel clause shows, the light is the light of the camp-fire, whose presence is a sign of life and activity. The first clause is quoted by Job in xxi. 7, and the statement denied.

6. Similarly, the lamp which hung from the roof of the tent was a sign that the tent was inhabited. Cf. Jer. xxv. 10: 'I will take away from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the mill-stones and the light of the lamp.'

7. 'To be straitened' is to be in distress or trouble, 'to be in a wide place' is to be in freedom or prosperity (cf. Ps. xviii. 37). The wicked man in his prosperity is compared to one walking in perfect freedom; but soon his path will be beset with difficulties and dangers (cf. xvii. 9; xix. 8).

8-10. His position is never secure. At any moment disaster may overtake him. Cf. xv. 21ff; xx. 17ff; Ps. xxxv. 6; lxxiii. 18; Prov. ii. 13; iv. 19.

8. His path contains many traps and pitfalls, and his next step may bring his downfall. *The toils*. The word comes from a root 'to interlace' or 'to weave.' Hence it probably refers to a lattice-work of sticks which covers a pit.

9-10. The 'gin,' 'snare,' 'noose,' and 'trap' are various devices for catching birds and animals, but the precise form of each is not quite certain.

11-13. He will be assailed by war (11), famine (12) and disease (13). Cf. xv. 22ff; xx. 23ff; xxvii. 13ff.

11. *Terrors* or calamities. The frequent combination of 'war, famine and pestilence' as the agents of God's wrath (Jer. v. 12; xi. 22; xiv. 12; xxi. 7, 9, etc.) makes it probable that the 'terrors' here are those of war, as the next two verses refer to famine and pestilence. The second part of the verse confirms this. There is no question of mere remorse or forebodings of evil as in Eliphaz's speech (xv. 20). *Discomfit him*. The usual translation is 'chase him at his heels.' But the only text quoted in favour of 'chase' is Ezech. xxxiv. 21, and there the context favours the usual meaning 'causes them to be scattered.' The Greek has a distinct subject ('many') for the verb in 11b. The

corresponding Hebrew word has the same form as the word for 'missiles' used in xvi. 13, and the Greek mistook one for the other. The verb is used in Ps. xviii. 15, cxliv. 6, in the sense of 'confuse' or 'discomfit,' and in each case by means of arrows, as here. Cf. xx. 24-25. *From behind*, lit. 'at his feet.' Cf. Hab. iii. 5, where it is opposed to 'in front.'

12. *Famine. In his affluence.* The preposition has been dropped by mistake in the Hebrew. Cf. xv. 21, xx. 22. where the misfortunes of the wicked are said to come 'in peace' or 'in the fulness of his plenty.' *For his downfall*, i.e. to reduce him to misery. Cf. Ps. xxxv. 15; xxxviii. 18; Jer. xx. 10.

13. *Pestilence or disease.* Cf. xxxiii. 19ff. *By disease.* The Heb. reads: 'It shall devour the members of his skin.' This is clearly wrong. There is no antecedent to 'it,' and 'the members of his skin' is an impossible expression. By a slight change we get 'by disease' instead of 'members.' The latter is due to 13b. The first-born of death is probably pestilence or plague, the scourge which brings death in its train.

14, 15, 18. He will be reduced to poverty, die a miserable death, and his possessions will pass to strangers.

14. *Where he felt secure*, lit. 'his security,' i.e. in which he thought no trouble could reach him. Cf. viii. 14. *Shall trample.* The Hebrew might be translated: 'Thou (or it) shall make him march to the king of terrors.' But though the phrase 'king of terrors' is attractive as a picturesque description of Death, the text is probably not correct. It is only in verse 18 that his death is described, here there is reference to his poverty. The Greek and Vulg. make 'terrors' subject, and read 'like' for 'to,' which gives a very natural text. Cf. 'Distress and anguish overpower him, like a king ready for the fray' (xvi. 24). Instead of being happy in the enjoyment of his wealth, he will be poor and miserable. The natural sequel to verse 14 is 18, which refers to his death (see below).

15. His possessions will pass to strangers. Cf. xv. 29; xx. 10, 18. *Strangers*, lit. 'that which is not his' (cf. xxiv. 6). The parallel passages indicate that there is reference to the occupation of his place by strangers. *Brimstone* is the symbol of ruin or desolation (cf. Deut. xxix. 23; Ps. xi. 6).

16-19. He will leave no posterity. He will be destroyed root and branch; his name will be forgotten, for no descendant of his will survive.

16. For the figure cf. viii. 16-19; xv. 30-33. The man and his family are compared to a tree, which will perish completely. Even the root will die, so there is no hope of a new growth (cf. xiv. 8; Is. v. 24).

17. Lands may be called by his name (Ps. xlix. 11), but the day will come when his name will not be remembered; others will have taken his place (cf. viii. 18). *In the fields.* Lit. 'on the face of the outside.' For this use of 'outside' compare v. 10; Ps. cxiv. 13.

18. This verse refers to the death of the wicked man, whereas 16-17 and again 19 deals with the oblivion which covers his name after his death. It should come after verse 14. The subject is 'terrors' of verse 14. *Light into darkness*, i.e. from life to the darkness of Sheol.

19. He will have no name in the land (17), because his family will have vanished utterly.

20-21. The impression caused by the downfall of the wicked on men in general, and on the just.

20. *They of the east . . . west . . .* The two words mean, literally, 'those before' and 'those behind.' Usually, the terms are employed in the temporal sense, i.e. former and future generations; but here they are used in the local sense, 'before' being east, and 'behind' being west. The two classes include all men.

xvii. 8. This verse, like xxii. 19, describes the impression made on the upright by the fate of the wicked. *Rejoice*. The Heb. has 'shall be appalled,' but in xxxi. 29, the verb 'exult' has as a parallel 'rejoice,' and Ehrlich suggests that this was the original reading here also.

21. If we are right in inserting xvii. 8 here, this verse is to be taken as expressing the sentiments of the upright as they look upon the abode of the wicked in its state of ruin. It is an exact parallel to xxii. 20.

## JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD, xix.

*Argument.* The subject-matter of this speech is the same as that of his reply to Eliphaz (xvi-xvii), the calumnies of his three friends. In the latter speech he made an unavailing appeal to God to declare him innocent of these charges before his death. The only thing he can now hope for is the vindication of his good name after death, and his conviction that God will ultimately intervene on his behalf is the principal feature of this reply to Bildad.

a) His friends do him a grievous wrong in attributing his sufferings to chastisement for his sins. While admitting that he may have 'erred' by faults committed without advertence, and that his language has been indiscreet, he denies that his sufferings are the due chastisement of these faults. The true explanation of the sufferings is that God has decreed to make him suffer despite his innocence (1-6). He has appealed for redress, but God, who had already taken away his prosperity and afflicted his person, is planning fresh assaults (7-12), and he is an object of contempt not only to strangers, but to his friends, and even the members of his own household (13-18).

b) His friends calumniate him because of his misery, but the time will come when God Himself will intervene to vindicate his good name. He himself will then be no more, but if he could see God acting as judge, he would see one who is no longer his enemy but his friend (19, 23-27b). But now his suffering must continue to the end, and his body gradually waste away. Let them pity his misery, and not persecute him as God is doing; otherwise, God will punish them for their injustice towards him (27c-29, 20-22).

*Strophic arrangement : 6 : 6 : 6.*

xix. 1 And Job answered and said :

2 How long will ye vex my soul ?

And crush me with words ?

3 These ten times have ye insulted me,

Have ye shamelessly maltreated me ;

4 Yea, indeed, I have erred,

With me doth mine error abide ;

[I have spoken words that profit not,

My sayings were in error, and without knowledge.]

5 But if ye deal arrogantly with me,

And make my shame proof against me,

6 Know then that it is God who hath subverted me,

And closed his net about me !

- 7 Lo, I cry out, ' Violence ! ' but am not answered,  
I cry for help, but there is no redress ;  
8 My way He hath fenced up, and I cannot pass,  
And on my path He hath put darkness ;  
9 He hath stripped me of my glory,  
And taken away the crown from my head ;  
10 He hath broken me down on every side, and I must  
go,  
He hath plucked up my hope as a tree ;  
11 He hath kindled His wrath against me,  
And reckoneth me as His adversary ;  
12 One and all His troops have come,  
They have cast up their way against me,  
And encamped round about my tent.
- 13 My brethren have gone aloof from me,  
And my acquaintances are wholly estranged from  
me ;  
14 My kinsfolk and familiar friends have gone,  
The guests of my house have forgotten me ;  
15 My handmaids reckon me as a stranger,  
An alien am I in their eyes ;  
16 I call to my servant, and he answereth not,  
I must needs entreat him with my mouth ;  
17 My breath is repulsive to my wife,  
I am loathsome to my own brothers ;  
18 The very children despise me,  
When I appear, they speak against me.
- 19 All my bosom-friends abhor me,  
And they whom I loved have turned against me ;  
23 Oh that my words were written down,  
Oh that they were inscribed on a scroll,  
24 That with an iron pen and lead  
They were graven on a rock for ever !  
25 And I know that my Defender liveth,  
And the Eternal will stand forth on the dust ;  
26 And after my skin is stripped off, did I but see Him,  
Without my flesh were I to behold God,

- 27 He whom I should see would be on my side,  
And whom my eyes should behold would not be  
estranged.

- My reins are consumed within me,  
[28b And the root of death is found in me ;]  
[20 In my skin my flesh rotteth away,  
And my bones protrude in sharp points ;  
21 Have pity on me, have pity on me, ye my friends,  
For the hand of God hath smitten me ;  
22 Why will ye persecute me like God ?  
And are ye not sated with my flesh ?]  
28 Because ye say : How shall we persecute him ?  
29 Be afraid for yourselves because of the sword,  
For wrath will be kindled against iniquity,  
That ye may know that there is judgment.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xix. 4c-d. Greek has an additional verse: *λαλήσαι ῥήματα* οὐκ ἔδει, τὰ δὲ ῥήματα μου πλανᾶται καὶ οὐκ ἐπὶ καιροῦ λαλήσαι is prob. a mistake for *λάλησαι*. οὐκ ἐπὶ καιροῦ = *לֹא בְעֵת* prob. a mistake for *לֹא-דַעַת*. The whole verse may be restored as follows: *דְּבַרְתִּי מִלֵּין לֹא יוֹעִילִי* *אֶמְרֹתִי שְׁגָגָה וְלֹא-דַעַת* 11b. 1. *כְּצָרוֹ* (G. Vulg. Syr. Targ.). M T *כְּצָרִי* 13a. 1. *הִרְחִיקוּ* (G. Syr. Aq. Sym.). M T *הִרְחִיק* 15a. *בֵּיתִי* connect with 14. 20a. 1. *בְּשָׂרִי רִקָּב* (G.). M T *וּבְבִשָּׂרִי דְּבִקָּה* 20b. 1. *עֲצָמִי וְאַתְמִלְטָהּ* (G.). M T *וְאַתְמִלְטָהּ* *בְּשָׁנִים* *בְּעוֹר שְׁנִי* (omit *בְּעוֹר*). 20-22. transp. ante 28. 24a. transp. ante 23b ? 26a. 1. *נִקְּפוּ זֹאתוּ* (or *נִקְּפוּ*). M T *נִקְּפוּ זֹאת* 28b. transp. post 27c. ? 1. *דְּבַר* M T *דְּבַר* 29c. 1. *תַּחַר בְּ* and transp. ante *עוֹנוֹת* M T *תַּחַר בְּ*.

## COMMENTARY.

2-6. Why will ye continue to wrong me by accusing me of sin? I admit that I may have been guilty of 'errors,' and that my language has been intemperate; but my suffering is not due to such trifling faults. It is due to the arbitrary decree of God.

2. They vex him (xvi. 7) and crush him with words of abuse and accusation (*cf.* xvi. 4).

3. *Ten times* i.e. repeatedly. *Cf.* 'Thou hast changed my wages ten times' (Gen. xxxi. 41). *Cf.* xvi. 7-11.

4. Most commentators take this verse as a conditional sentence: 'Even if I had really erred, my sin is no concern of yours (Dhorme), or my sin hurts no one but myself (Peake, Peters), or I alone would be conscious of my sin (Dillmann). But none of these is quite satisfactory. With regard to the first, Job would be the first to admit that it *was* their concern. Eliphaz reminds him that he had been accustomed to exhort sinners in the past (iv. 3), and Job is anxious to be shown his faults (vii. 24). The argument holds with equal force against the second view. With regard to the third view, the friends are quite willing to admit that not only they, but even Job himself, may be quite unaware of his sin; but it is known to God whose knowledge far surpasses that of man.

But Job does not deny that he may have been guilty of trifling offences. He complains that God is bringing against him the 'sins of his youth' (xiii. 26), and watching for trivial faults; he also admits that his language has been intemperate (vi. 3; 26). What he does deny is that he has been guilty of sins which would justify such extraordinary affliction. There is therefore no necessity to take the verse either as conditional or interrogative. *I have erred.* The words 'err' and 'error' are used in the technical sense of sins committed without advertence. Job admits that in respect to these he is like other men.

4c-d. In the Greek text there is added here a whole verse to which there is nothing corresponding in the Hebrew. It has received but scant consideration from critics, who reject it without hesitation as a gloss. But, on the other hand, the general tendency of the Greek is to abbreviate, not to make additions; it cannot be regarded as a gloss on verse 4; and it is remarkable that it not only forms a complete verse, but is required to make the strophe of the normal length. For these reasons the verse is probably to be regarded as part of the original text. The Greek itself is not free from corruption (see critical note).

5. If you maintain that my suffering proves that I have committed more grievous sins, I must plead not guilty. My sufferings are due to a totally different cause. *Deal arrogantly with, lit., 'show yourselves great against,'* i.e. point triumphantly to my sufferings as a proof. *Cf.* Ps. xxxv. 26; xxxviii. 17; lv. 13. *Make . . . proof,* argue from my sufferings that these sins of inadvertence or negligence were of a much more serious nature. Eliphaz, in fact, gives some examples of such faults committed



by Job, viz., his failure to succour the poor and the oppressed (xxii. 6ff).

6. My sufferings are due to the arbitrary will of God (*cf.* xvi. 12ff). *Subverted*, deprived me of my right (xxvii. 2), by afflicting me without my having deserved it by sin. *Closed His net*. Bildad has just asserted that the wicked man is thrust into a net by his own conduct (xviii. 8-10). Job replies that it is God, and not his own sins, that has caused his troubles.

7-12. He has already appealed to God against this unjust accusation, and the persecution which accompanies it. But God has rejected his appeal. He has decreed his humiliation; and in consequence of this decree, He has impoverished him and afflicted his person.

7. *I cry 'violence.'* This alludes to his persecution at the hands of his friends (xvi. 6ff), and his prayer for redress which has been rejected (xvii. 5-7). *Cf.* xxx. 20ff.

8. Job was going serenely on his way, when suddenly he found his path blocked by insuperable barriers and made still more dangerous by darkness. For the metaphor see xvii. 9. This verse is a general summary of the disaster which befell him, which is described in detail in the following verses.

9. His first series of calamities (*cf.* xvi. 12). *My glory*, i.e. robe of honour, as the parallel 'crown' shows. The reference is to his wealth and social position. *Cf.* xxx. 11, 15.

10. He is like a gorgeous palace laid in ruins (*cf.* Is. xxx. 13), or a tree plucked up by the roots. *And I must go*, i.e. like the inhabitants whose houses are destroyed (*cf.* xviii. 14). *My hope*, i.e. my happiness as in xvii. 15. *Like a tree*, completely. *Cf.* 'The desires of my heart are plucked out' (xvii. 11).

11. Job's second calamity (*cf.* xvi. 12-14). The reference is to his bodily infirmities. The second clause is quoted by Elihu in xxxiii. 10. *Cf.* xiii. 24.

12. God assailed him like an army besieging a fortress. The three clauses describe the three stages of the attack: the gathering of the troops, the making of siege-works, and the siege. *Cf.* xxx. 2-14.

13-18. He is now reduced to a state of abject misery, an object of contempt not only to strangers, but even to the members of his own household. *Cf.* xvi. 15-16; xxx. 1ff.

13. In this and the following verses the groups are arranged in the order of their intimacy: men in general, mere acquaintances; kinsfolk, familiar friends and former guests; members of his household (slaves, wife and brothers). *My brethren*, or rather 'my fellows,' the ordinary members of the community, with whom he has no special ties. Its parallel is 'they who knew me' i.e. mere acquaintances.

14. The first two words of verse 15 should be taken with this verse. The group includes his special friends. Those who were once his guests come no more; they shun their former friend.

15. The members of his household, slaves, wife and brothers. His female slaves, once his chattels, now look upon him as a stranger without any rights over them.

16. His men-servants disobey him, and he is forced to beg where he used to command.

17. Apart from the Prologue, Job's wife is mentioned only here and in xxxi. 10. *My brothers*, lit. 'the children of my womb.' If this be taken literally, it is in contradiction with i. 18, and we must assume that the writer has forgotten that all Job's children are dead. But in iii. 10, we have the expression 'the doors of my womb' i.e. the womb in which I was conceived. Similarly, the 'children of my womb' are his uterine brothers, children of the same mother (cf. Jud. viii. 10; Ps. 1, 20). Job was a patriarch whose household comprised many families, and it is natural that his brothers should be mentioned.

18. *Children*. These may be the children of the brothers mentioned in verse 17, or the children of the community in general. These at least might be expected to show respect to the aged patriarch (cf. xxix. 8). But even they are insolent towards him.

19, 23-27. Though his friends calumniate him, he is confident that God Himself will intervene after his death to vindicate his honour. If he could see God acting as judge, he would see Him as a friend and not as an enemy.

19. Job now returns to his main theme—the calumnies of his three friends (cf. xvi. 18ff). The 'bosom-friends' (lit. 'men of my council') and 'they whom I loved' are Eliphaz, Bildad and Sophar (cf. xvi. 7ff).

20-22. These three verses are probably out of place. a) They are addressed to the three friends, and are separated from their companion verses in 28-29, which are likewise addressed to the friends. b) They interrupt the sequence between 19 and 23ff. c) If placed with 28-29, verse 20 forms a natural sequence to 27c, and the latter becomes the introduction to a description of Job's misery. d) Verse 22 leads on to 28. Note the repetition of the word 'persecute.' For commentary see below.

23. As his death is now imminent, Job cannot long continue to maintain his innocence; hence he wishes that his words could be preserved for future generations when he himself is no more. In his preceding speech (xvi. 22) he urged the speedy hearing of his appeal because in a 'few short years' it would be too late. He is now convinced that he will be dead before vindication comes. *On a scroll*, i.e. of parchment. For the preservation of valuable records on parchment cf. Is. viii. 16; Jer. xxxii. 10ff. Some scholars (e.g. Dhorme) hold that the word means not 'scroll' but 'bronze' (cf. Ass. *siparu*). But there is no evidence that this word existed in Hebrew.

24. It is difficult to decide whether he refers to two kinds of writing, one with an iron stylus on a tablet of lead, and the other engraved on a rock, or to a single inscription on a rock, with the

characters filled with lead to preserve them from the ravages of time. Dhorme thinks that there is question in 24a of a stylus made of an alloy of iron and lead. Perhaps the whole obscurity of the verse has arisen from an accidental transposition of 23b and 24a; for if 24a followed 23a, the passage would read more naturally:

23a Oh that my words were written down,  
 24a With an iron pen and lead!  
 23b Oh that they were inscribed on a scroll,  
 Graven on a rock for ever!

In this case, the pen and lead would have reference to a stylus and a leaden tablet, the scroll and the inscription on the rock to more permanent records.

25. If they were preserved for future generations, they would eventually be proved true. *My Defender*. The Hebrew word (*go'el*) means the next of kin, who is bound by various obligations towards his kinsman, e.g. to redeem him from bondage or debt (Lev. xxv. 48f), to avenge his death (Deut. xix. 6, 12). In Isaias xl-lxvi God is frequently called the *Go'el* of Israel (cf. Is. xli. 14; xliii. 14; xlv. 6, etc.), i.e. the deliverer from the captivity of Babylon. Job regards God as his *go'el*, who will look after his interests when he is no more. *Liveth*. The word is emphatic: though he himself will be dead, his *Go'el* will live on. *The Eternal*, lit. 'the Last.' The word is parallel to 'Defender' as an attribute of God. The meaning is assured by comparison with Is. xlv. 6; xlviii. 12; 'I am the First, and I am the Last.' The word does not mean 'hereafter' or 'on the last day' (cf. Vulg.). *He will stand forth*, lit. 'arise.' The word is used in the legal sense, to come forward as witness or judge (cf. xxxi. 14; Deut. xix. 15; Is. ii. 19, 21; xxiii. 10; Ps. xii. 6). *On the dust*, i.e. on the earth. God is now in heaven, and according to Job, takes no account of the affairs of men; but eventually He will appear on the earth in judgment.

26. *Versiculus brevis, septem constans voculis, at undequaque difficultatibus septus* (Knabenbauer). Not only is there a great variety of views among commentators, but the Versions (Greek, Vulg. and Syriac) present three somewhat different interpretations. The countless emendations proposed for the supposed corruptions of the text have added to the general confusion. Nevertheless, it is being more and more recognised that the Versions represent a text substantially the same as the present Hebrew, and so every explanation of the text must start from the Hebrew as basis.

The ambiguous features in the text are: a) The word 'after' might be an adverb (afterwards) or a preposition, or a conjunction. b) The verb in 26a might be from a root meaning 'to strike off' or from a root meaning 'to surround.' c) 'From my flesh' might mean 'from the standpoint of my flesh,' i.e. while I am still alive, or 'without my flesh,' when I am a disembodied spirit. d) The last two words of 26a 'they have stripped off-this' are certainly corrupt.

Apart from accidental differences, the various views on this difficult passage may be included under the following three general lines of interpretation; and it may clarify the issue if we first examine them and see which of them, if any, is in conformity with the teaching of the book as a whole.

i. Job will rise from the dead, and receive his vindication from the mouth of God Himself (Vulgate, Knabenbauer). This takes 'after' as an adverb 'hereafter' (Vulg. *in novissimo die*), the verb in 26a in the sense of 'surround' (with flesh), and 'from my flesh' in the sense of 'in bodily form.' This view finds little favour with modern scholars. If Job believed in the resurrection, and the possibility of reward after death, he would have had an adequate solution of the problem of suffering, and the whole discussion would have been futile. Or, if we suppose that the writer wished to represent Job as gradually arriving at this belief, this passage would have been the climax of the whole discussion. But actually, the discussion continues on the same lines as before, and in the following speeches neither Job nor the friends make any advance on the current ideas on death and Sheol (*cf.* xxi. 23-26; xxiv. 21-25; xxx. 23; xxxi. 1-6.)

ii. Job will not die; God will intervene before his death, and restore him to his former prosperity. This is what actually occurs according to the Epilogue, and the writer merely puts into the mouth of Job a prophecy of what actually takes place (Budde, Torczyner, Dhorme, Peters, &c.). In this view, 'after' is a proposition = 'behind my skin,' or a conjunction: 'after my skin hath been struck off'; 'from my flesh' is 'while I am still alive.' The verb of 26a is either retained in the sense of 'even though diseased,' or it is emended in accordance with the view taken of the passage as a whole (*cf.* Dhorme). It is very difficult to reconcile this view with the view attributed to Job in the rest of the book. In the early speeches he was still hopeful of a respite from suffering before death; but in his recent speeches, nothing stands out so prominently as the hopelessness of his case. In the speech just before this he expressly rejects the suggestion that there is still hope (xvii. 10-16). In the later speeches there is no hint that his belief has changed (*cf.* xxiii. 13-14; xxx. 23). But above all, verses 23-24 of this chapter appear conclusive. Job's wish that his words were written on a scroll or engraven on a rock has no meaning if he expected to be alive for his vindication.

iii. Many, if not the majority, of modern critics are convinced by the reasons mentioned that Job does not expect vindication before death. It will come only when he is no more; but, even in death, Job will be conscious of it, and he will see God acting on his behalf (Wellhausen, Duhm, Smend, Driver, Gray, Steuernagel, Koenig, Peake, etc.). In this view the text is interpreted: 'After my skin hath been stripped off, without my flesh I shall see God.' From the purely philological standpoint, this view is far more natural than the other two. But it involves one insuperable difficulty. Such a thought would have been impossible to the writer considering his idea of Sheol. Job himself

could not be more explicit than he is in xiv. 21-22 that in Sheol man is completely cut off from the knowledge of things of earth, and from everything outside his own person. It is difficult to understand how he could abruptly give expression to a belief so contrary to the general belief and to his own.

But there is another line of interpretation which has escaped the attention of scholars, and it is, in the opinion of the present writer, the only means by which we can give a meaning to the present text which will be in conformity with the teaching and the dogmatic background of the book as a whole. This is to regard verse 26, not as a statement at all, but a conditional clause. He does not assert that he *will* see God, but that *if* he were to see God, he would see Him as friendly, and no longer hostile. We have many such examples of conditional sentences, without a conditional particle, even in the book of Job (*cf.* v. 24; xiii. 18; xix. 18; xxiii. 10), and the usage is recognised by all grammarians (*cf.* Joüon, 167, a-b; Ges-Kautzsch, 159, b-k). It is remarkable that the Syriac seems to have interpreted the text in this sense. It translates (or rather summarises): 'If my eyes were to see God, they would see light.'

*Did I but see him.* There is no doubt that the present text 'they have stripped off—this' is corrupt. There is no subject for the verb, and 'this' stands completely isolated. All critics admit the necessity for emendation, and the corrections suggested depend on the view taken of the text as a whole. The first word might be easily emended by reading the singular for the plural: 'He hath stripped off' (making 'God' subject), or 'hath been stripped off' (pointing the verb as passive). For 'this' we might adopt the simple emendation suggested by Budde (*cf.* Peters) 'like this'; but the parallelism suggests something which is just as close to the present text, but far more satisfactory in meaning. If we write down the verse without the word 'this,' the correct reading of the verse 'leaps to the eye':

After my skin is stripped off . . .

Without my flesh were I to behold God,

'After my skin is stripped off' is parallel to 'without my flesh,' and the parallel to 'were I to behold God' is missing. Now in the next verse we have the two synonymous words for 'to see,' and a change of a single letter suffices to restore the same parallelism here. The missing word is 'I saw Him,' which is to be translated conditionally: 'Did I but see Him.'

'From my flesh,' in accordance with the parallelism, is to be taken as 'without my flesh,' as a disembodied spirit. For this use of the preposition *cf.* xi. 15; xxi. 9.

27. Here again we must note the perfect parallelism of the clauses: 'He whom I should see' is parallel to 'He whom my eyes should behold,' and 'on my side' to 'not estranged.' For the form of the sentences compare 'He whom thou shalt curse shall be cursed' (Num. xxii. 6), 'He with whom it shall be found shall die' (Gen. xlv. 9). Each half of the verse is a complete noun-clause, of which the subject is not a single noun,

but a phrase. The predicate in one case is 'on my side,' in the other 'not estranged.'

*On my side.* In Ps. xlv. 1; lvi. 10; cxviii. 6 and cxxiv. 1, we find the phrase 'Jahweh is on my side' (lit. 'to me'), or the equivalent, in exactly the same sense as here.' The only difference is that in the Psalms the subject is 'Jahweh,' here an equivalent phrase. *Not estranged.* God would no longer be his enemy (11b) but his friend (25a).

27c-29+21-22. Job's miserable condition. He is on the verge of dissolution, his flesh rotting away, and his bones protruding. Let them pity his misery, and not join God in persecuting him; otherwise they will rue it when the day of retribution comes.

27c. As in x. 18-21, xiii. 18-22, xvii. 5-7, Job relapses into his despondent mood, and dwells on his present misery. *My reins.* The word is used above (xvi. 13) of the vital organs of the body which are pierced by God's arrows (cf. Lam. iii. 13). But the word is frequently taken in a figurative sense, as the seat of the emotions (cf. Ps. xvi. 7; lxxiii. 21; Jer. xli. 2; Prov. xxiii. 16), and is usually taken in the latter sense here. But, as it stands, the clause is isolated; for it cannot be joined to the preceding verse. If, however, 20-22 are to be inserted here, 27c (taken literally) forms an appropriate introduction to the description of his woes. The other half of the verse is to be found in 28b (see below).

20. The text of this verse is very different in the Hebrew and the Greek. Hebrew: 'My bone adhereth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped by the skin of my teeth.' This contains many anomalies: the word 'skin' is repeated; the bones may adhere to the skin (Lam. iv. 8) or to the flesh (Ps. cii. 6), hardly to both at the same time; the expression 'by the skin of my teeth,' though now proverbial, is nonsense. The Greek represents a much simpler text: 'In my skin my flesh rotteth away, and my bones come forth in teeth.' It is easy to see how this could have been corrupted into the present Hebrew. Under the influence of Lam. iv. 8 and Ps. cii. 6, the word 'bone' was taken with 20a, and the verb 'rotteth' changed to 'cleaveth.' The word 'in my skin' was repeated to complete the second half of the verse. There is scarcely a doubt that the Greek represents the original text. The meaning is: his flesh is rotting away, and he is emaciated (cf. vii. 5; xvii. 7). Elihu has a similar description of one afflicted by God for his sins: 'His flesh is consumed from sight, and his bones which were invisible are laid bare' (xxxiii. 21). *Come forth*, cf. xli. 11, where the word is used of the sparks of fire which come from the jaws of Leviathan. Here it is used of the bones which become visible because of his wasted appearance. *In sharp points*, lit. 'in teeth.' The word is used in xxix. 28 (cf. 1 Sam. xiv. 4) of a peak of rock.

21. Cf. Lam. i. 12: 'All ye that pass by the way, attend and

see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow . . . wherewith Jahweh had afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger.'

22. *Like God.* God is hunting him like a lion (x. 16), and his friends are like the jackals or the vultures waiting to devour the victim of the chase. *Sated with my flesh.* In Aramaic 'to eat the flesh or fragments of a man' is to calumniate him (cf. Dan. iii. 8; vi. 25), and this may be the meaning of the clause here. But the word 'persecute' (pursue) is rather in favour of the metaphor of the chase. Let them cease from devouring their victim.

28. If you persist in persecuting me, beware of the vengeance of God, my Defender. Note the repetition of the word 'persecute' from 22, an indication that these two verses originally stood together. The second clause of the verse reads: 'And the root of a word (thing) is found in me.' As the Versions have 'in him' for 'in me' this reading is usually adopted by critics. Nevertheless, it is difficult to give the clause an intelligible meaning if spoken by the friends. They were not seeking for the basis of a legal process (Dhorme), nor searching for the crimes which were the cause of his troubles (Peters). They have already made up their minds that his sufferings are due to his sins. It is suggested that the Hebrew text be retained, and that the clause be joined to 27c to form a complete verse. Instead of 'word' or 'thing' we should probably translate 'death' or 'dissolution' (cf. Arab. *dabr*). The usual meaning is 'plague,' 'pestilence.' Cf. the use of 'death' = 'pestilence' in xxvii. 15.

29. When God intervenes, He will not only pronounce Job innocent, but condemn and punish those who have been unjust to him. In xiii. 6-11, Job similarly warns them. The text of 29b is corrupt. Heb. 'For wrath—iniquities—the sword.' Ball rightly calls it 'ungrammatical and untranslatable.' It is generally recognised that the Greek represents the original, at least substantially; though critics are not agreed as to the precise wording of the original (see critical note).

## SOPHAR'S SECOND SPEECH, xx.

*Argument.* Like Eliphaz and Bildad in this Cycle, Sophar speaks only of the miserable fate of the wicked. His speech consists of two parts: a) the 'instruction' which he received on the problem from a mysterious inner voice, and b) his own teaching based upon it.

a) Sophar confesses that he too had once been troubled at seeing the wicked prosper; but a mysterious inner voice warned him that such prosperity is of brief duration. The wicked man is cut off in his prime (2-5, 11). No matter how wealthy and powerful he may be, his greatness will vanish like a dream, and his children will endure poverty (6-10). The wickedness which brought him wealth and pleasure will likewise cause his ruin (12-16).

b) Let him not trust in his wealth, for he will not live to enjoy it. For he acquired it by rapacity and greed (17-21). In the height of his prosperity he will be assailed by famine, disease and war (22-25b). All the forces of nature—darkness, fire, thunder, earthquake and flood—will combine to destroy him and his family (25c-29).

It will be noticed that the question is discussed twice, viz. by the 'inner voice,' and by Sophar himself.

*Strophic arrangement* : 5 : 5 : 5.

xx. 1 And Sophar the Namaathite answered and said :

2 To calm my anxious thoughts that disturb me,  
     And because of my agitation within me,  
 3 An instruction that rebuketh me do I hear,  
     And a spirit from my intelligence answereth me :  
 4 " This I know from olden time,  
     Since man was placed upon the earth :  
 5 That the exultation of the wicked is brief,  
     And the joy of the impious but for a moment ;  
 [11 While his bones are full of their youthful vigour,  
     It shall lie down with him in the dust.]

6 Though his height reach the heavens,  
     And his head touch the clouds,  
 7 Like chaff he shall perish for ever,  
     They that have seen him shall say : Where is he ?  
 8 Like a dream he shall vanish, and shall not be found,  
     He shall pass away like a vision of the night ;



- 9 The eye that hath seen him shall not see him again,  
And his place shall know him no more ;
- 10 His children shall be oppressed, being poor,  
And his hands shall restore his wealth.
- 12 Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth,  
Though he hide it under his tongue,
- 13 Though he spare it, and will not let it go,  
And hold it back within his mouth,
- 14 His food in his bowels shall change  
Into venom of asps within him ;
- 15 He hath swallowed riches, he shall vomit them up,  
From his belly shall God cast them out,
- 16 Venom of asps doth he suck,  
The viper's tongue shall slay him."
- 17 Let him not look upon rivers of oil,  
Streams of honey and butter ;
- 18 Restoring his gains, he shall not swallow,  
In the wealth of his increase he shall not rejoice ;
- 19 Because he hath broken down the hovel of the  
poor,  
He hath seized a house, he shall not build it up ;
- 20 Because he hath not known satisfaction in his belly,  
By his precious things he shall not escape ;
- 21 None escaped his devouring,  
Therefore his prosperity shall not endure.
- 22 In the fulness of his plenty he shall be in straits,  
Every form of trouble shall come upon him ;
- 23 . . . . .  
It shall serve to fill his belly ;  
He shall send against him His burning anger,  
And rain down tumours upon his flesh ;
- 24 Should he flee from the iron weapon,  
The bow of brass shall transfix him,
- 25 And the shaft shall come out of his back,  
And the flashing point come forth from his gall.

- For him terrors are stored up,  
 26 All darkness is reserved for him ;  
 A fire not blown upon shall devour him,  
 It shall devour that which is left in his tent ;  
 27 The heavens shall reveal his iniquity,  
 And the earth shall rise up against him ;  
 28 A flood shall sweep away his house,  
 A downpour in his day of wrath ;  
 29 This is the portion of the wicked man from God,  
 And the heritage of his pride from God.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xx. 2a. 1. לָכֵן (inf. hiphil of כָּוֵן). MT לָכֵן. 1. יְשִׁימוֹנִי  
 (שָׁמַם). MT יְשִׁיבוֹנִי. 4a. 1. וְאֵת יָדְעָתִי (Syr. Sym. Vulg.).  
 MT הָיְזָאת יָדְעָתִי. 7a. 1. כְּגִלְגָּל (cf. Ps. lxxxiii. 14 ; Is. xvii.  
 13). MT כְּגִלְגָּל. 10a. 1. יִרְצֹנִי (Sym. Vulg.). MT יִרְצֹנִי.  
 11. transp. post 5. 17a. 1. יִצְהָר. MT גִּהְרִי. 18a. 1. יִגְעֹנִי.  
 MT יִגְעֹנִי. 18b. 1. לֹא. MT וְלֹא (1 dittogr.). 19a. 1. עֹזֵב  
 (cf. G., Neh. iii. 8). MT עֹזֵב. 22b. 1. עָמַל (G. Vulg.). MT  
 עָמַל. 23b. 1. חָלִים or עֲפָלִים (cf. G.) or חֲבָלִים (cf. xxi.  
 17). MT עָלִימוֹ. 25a. 1. שָׁלַח (G.). MT שָׁלַח. 1. מִגֹּה (G.  
 Targ. Vulg.). MT מִגֹּה. 26a. 1. לֹא צְפוֹנִים. MT לֹא צְפוֹנִי.  
 Transp. צְפוֹנִים to 25b. 28a. 1. יָגַל (G. Targ.). MT יָגַל.  
 29b. אָמַר = pride. cf. אָמַר (Is. xvii. 6) and הִתְאָמַר  
 (Ps. xciv. 4).

## COMMENTARY.

2-5, 10. My troubled thoughts were calmed by an inner voice revealing to me the brevity of the success of the wicked.

2. The opening verse presents a textual difficulty. It reads: 'Therefore anxious thoughts disturb me, and because of my agitation in me.' To improve the parallelism, Gray Peters, and others insert the word 'this' in 2b: 'because of *this* my agitation is in me.' 'Therefore' and 'this' refer back to the final statement of Job in xix. A much less drastic change is to point the first word in 2a as a verb and read 'to calm.' The word is used with 'heart' as object in Ps. x. 17; lvii. 8; cviii. 2; cxii. 7, in the sense 'to set the mind at ease,' 'to relieve anxiety.' *Anxious thoughts* (cf. iv. 13; Ps. xciv. 19; cxxxix. 23). The anxious thoughts which troubled Sophar are the same as those which disturbed the repose of Eliphaz (iv. 13), viz. the apparent violation of the law of retribution, when the wicked are seen to prosper. Psalm lxxii. affords a close parallel. And just as Eliphaz has his doubts removed by the ghostly visitor, so Sophar too receives a message which removes his anxiety. *Which disturb me*, lit. send me 'back,' i.e. which defeat me (cf. Is. xlvi. 25). But we should probably make a slight change and translate 'which *appal* me' (cf. xxi. 5; xxiii. 15). *Agitation* lit. 'haste.'

3. *An instruction which rebuketh me.* Commentators generally take this to refer to Job's speech (see note on 2). But then they find 3b 'a bad parallel and scarcely intelligible' (Gray). But it is obvious that the 'instruction which he hears' and the 'spirit which answers him' refer to the same thing. It is an inner voice, like that which speaks to the prophets (cf. Is. xlviii. 16; lxi. 1), by which God instructs him and answers his difficulties. This inner voice reproves him for his doubts, and unravels the mystery which baffled him. *Which rebuketh*, lit. 'of my rebuke' cf. 'the chastisement which made us whole' lit. 'the chastisement of our wholeness' (Is. liii. 5). *From my intelligence*, i.e. the message comes from within, from the inspiration of God. Cf. xxxii. 8, where Elihu similarly claims special guidance from a 'spirit within man.' We have thus a revelation parallel to that received by Eliphaz from his nocturnal visitor (iv. 17-20). The 'answer' is contained in verses 4ff; which is to be understood as the message addressed to Sophar, as iv. 17-20 is the message addressed to Eliphaz.

4. In this verse, whether addressed to Sophar or to Job (the usual view), there are two difficulties: 'Dost thou know' is to be taken apparently as equivalent to 'dost thou *not* know?'; and Sophar (or Job) is supposed to be aware of what has happened since the creation of man. Budde and Peters avoid both difficulties by making 'this' refer to Job's speech: 'Dost thou know this from of old?' i.e. Your knowledge is quite modern, the old is preferable. The older wisdom is then explained in the following verses. But, as Dhorme remarks, the natural correlation between the Hebrew particles 'this' and 'namely

that 'excludes this view. Others connect 'of olden time,' not with 'dost thou know' but with 'this': Of course thou knowest that this has happened from of old, namely that . . . But this construction is awkward and unnatural. The Syriac and Vulg. have the first person 'I know,' and if the interpretation of 2-3 given above is correct, a very natural explanation of this verse suggests itself. The speaker is the 'inner voice' addressing Sophar. Only a heavenly being could know what has been happening since 'man was placed upon the earth.'

5. The same solution of the problem is given in Psalm lxxiii. The Psalmist, like Sophar, was perplexed by the prosperity of the wicked, and tempted to reject the doctrine of the justice of God, until he learned the secret from the 'mysteries of God.' For their prosperity is only for a time, then they will perish suddenly, and utterly disappear. Verse 11 should probably be inserted here (see below).

6-11. Be his prosperity ever so great, it will vanish completely and his children will live in poverty.

6. The figure is that of a mighty tree. Cf. Ps. xxxvii. 35: 'I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green tree in his native soil (or exalted like the cedars of Lebanon—LXX), but one passed by, and lo, he was not, and I sought him, and he could not be found.' Cf. xv. 30ff; xviii. 16.

7. *Like chaff*. The usual translation is 'like his own dung.' Dhorme takes the word to be the equivalent of the Assyrian *gallu*, a phantom or ghost (cf. Greek γέλλω a kind of vampire or goblin supposed to carry off young children). But this does not suit here. We require something which is the antithesis of a tall tree, something fragile and transient. I suggest the word *gilgal* which is used as a synonym of 'stubble' (Ps. lxxxiii. 15) or 'chaff' (Is. xvii. 13). Job is probably alluding to this verse when he asks 'how often . . . are they like stubble before the wind?' (xxi. 18).

8. *Like a dream*. The same figure is used in Is. xxix. 8 of the power of Assyria, and in Ps. lxxiii. 20 of the prosperity of the wicked.

9. Cf. vii. 10; viii. 18; Ps. xxxvii. 10; ciii. 16.

10. The text has: 'His children shall compensate (or shall court the favour of) the poor.' The former is certainly wrong, because the wicked man had already lost all his wealth. The alternative translation means that they will be the poorest of the poor. But all the Versions read some form of the verb 'crush,' and we should probably read the passive with 'children' as subject. Cf. 'His children shall be oppressed in the gate' (v. 4). They will be poor, because their father has died in poverty. *His hands shall restore* i.e. to the rightful owners, from whom he has obtained by unlawful means. Cf. xxvii. 17.

11. He will perish prematurely. Cf. xv. 32; xxii. 16; Ps. xxxvii. 2; lxxiii. 18ff. It is generally assumed that the subject

of the verb in 11b is 'youthful vigour' of verse 10; the plural noun being used as an abstract, and therefore feminine. But the context rather indicates that it is *his prosperity* that perished with him. Besides, the reference to his sudden death should have come earlier, before 6ff. If the verse is transferred to that place the subject will be 'joy' of verse 5. This view of the verse is confirmed by comparison with xvi. 11, where Job speaks of his happiness going down with him to the dust.

12-16. His wickedness brought him wealth and pleasure; in due course, it will bring sorrow, impoverishment and death.

12. Wickedness is like a delicious morsel, which a man sucks with relish; but which when swallowed turns into a virulent poison. He will enjoy his ill-gotten riches for a while, but they will eventually cause his ruin.

14. His pleasure will be changed to pain.

15. The first result of the poisoning—vomiting. This is symbolical of the impoverishment of the wicked, who is compelled by God to relinquish his wealth (*cf.* 10; v. 2-3; xxvii. 19).

16. The second result—death. Sin inevitably brings about the ruin of the sinner. *Cf.* xviii. 7.

17-21. Let him not therefore trust in his wealth. For he acquired it by oppression and greed, and it will not endure.

17. The preceding strophe concluded the message of the mysterious spirit or inner voice which removed Sophar's doubts regarding retribution. The rest of his speech consists of his deductions from the 'instruction' he has received (*cf.* v. 1ff). *Let him not look upon.* The translation 'he shall not look upon' is not correct. The meaning is not that he will suffer misfortune, but that he must not look upon his present prosperity as a guarantee against poverty. Eliphaz argues in precisely the same manner in xv. 31. *Rivers of oil, cf.* xxix. 6. In the text the word for 'oil' has been corrupted to 'streams.' *Honey and butter, cf.* 'land flowing with milk and honey' (Ex. iii. 8, 17). *Cf.* xxix. 6: 'when my steps were washed with butter, etc.'

18. Others, and not he himself, will enjoy his wealth. *Cf.* xxvii. 17: 'He may prepare, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall share the silver.' *Restoring.* The same word used in verse 10—his wealth must be restored to those whom he wronged. *His gain,* lit. 'his labour,' hence the proceeds of his labour, the produce of his lands.

19. In this and the following verse the first clause indicates the crime, the second its appropriate punishment. He has seized the property of the poor, in order to build up a huge estate for himself (*cf.* xv. 28b.; Is. v. 8ff). *Hovel.* The word in the text is a verb: 'he hath left the poor'; but the second part of the verse shows that there is question of the seizure of the poor man's house. There is some evidence that the root also means 'build' (*cf.* Ox. Lex. ad voc.) and the noun from the same root may mean 'hovel.' He will not get time to build up the estate and the mansion which he has planned.

20. His avarice was insatiable; he was for ever piling up riches. But they will not save him. *Precious things*, i.e. his accumulated wealth (Ps. xxxix. 12; Is. xlv. 9).

21. His rapacity was unbounded. Cf. Is. v. 8: 'And ye are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land.'

22-25. Suddenly, in the height of his prosperity, trouble will come—poverty, disease, and war.

22. Cf. xviii. 12; xv. 21. *Trouble*. The reading of the Greek and Vulg. is to be preferred to the Hebrew 'he who is in trouble.' *Every form* lit. 'every hand'; this is explained in the following verses.

23a. The first clause is unintelligible, and Duhm and Peters omit it as a gloss. The subject of 23b is evidently 'God,' who has not been mentioned, and it is probable that 23a is the second member of a verse of which the first (which contained a mention of God) is missing. The following verse (23b-c) suggests that it had reference to some form of disease which attacked his internal organs. The metaphor of poison (14-16) suggests something like: 'God will give him venom for his food.'

23b-c. The second clause is obscure. Heb. 'He shall rain upon him against his flesh,' and it is generally assumed that either 'upon him' or 'against his flesh' is wrong. The context favours a reference to disease or plague, hence the word 'flesh' is to be retained. It is a rare word only found in Soph. i. 17 and probably Job vi. 7. Instead of 'upon him' we should probably read 'diseases' or 'tumours' (cf. Greek). Dhorme reads a word for weapons (cf. 24). But cf. xxi. 17c, which seems to allude to this verse.

24. He will be assailed by all kinds of weapons. Defeated in a hand to hand encounter, should he try to escape, he will be pierced by an arrow. *Should he flee*. This is the usual meaning of the word; but in xli. 20, it is used in the sense of 'pierce,' and it is quite possible that this is the meaning here also. This would demand a slight change of pointing (He shall be pierced).

25. The shaft of the arrow will protrude from his back, and the point will pierce his gall (cf. xvi. 13). *Flashing point*, lit. 'lightning.' In Deut. xxxii. 41, it refers to the sword, in Hab. iii. 11, to the lance; here it refers to the point of the arrow.

25c-29. All the forces of nature—darkness, fire, thunder, earthquake, flood—will combine to destroy every vestige of him and his family.

25c-26a. The last clause of 25 reads: 'against him terrors,' the verb being wanting. On the other hand, 26a is too long: 'all darkness is laid up for his treasures.' The verb of 25c has probably been misplaced, and corrupted to 'his treasures.' *Terrors* as in xv. 21, xviii. 14, xxvii. 20, are the terrors of death. *Darkness*, the darkness of Sheol cf. x. 21-22.

26b-c. A mysterious fire will consume both himself and his family. *Not blown upon*, i.e. not kindled by man; a fire like

that which consumed the sons of Core (Num. xvi. 35). *That which is left*, i.e. his family. Cf. xv. 30-33; xviii. 16-19.

27. Heaven and earth will unite against him. *Shall reveal*. There may be reference here to the thunder, which is God's voice rebuking the sinner (Ps. xviii. 15; Is. xxx. 31). In this case, the 'earth rising up against him' has reference to the earthquake (Ps. xviii. 7).

28. The flood is caused, like the Deluge, partly by rain from above, partly by the outburst of waters from beneath the earth. *A flood*. The word usually means 'produce' (of the soil); but this is impossible here. It is probably another form of the word which occurs in Is. xxx. 25; xlv. 4; Jer. xvii. 8 = 'a stream.' *A downpour*, lit. 'things poured out,' a rain like that which caused the Deluge. Cf. Ps. xviii. 15. Cf. the description of the Deluge as due to rain from above and the waters from the abyss beneath the earth (Gen. vii. 11).

29. Conclusion. Cf. xviii. 21. *His pride*. The usual meaning is 'his word'; but as this is not suitable here, many critics substitute some word which gives a better parallel to 'wicked' (cf. xxvii. 13). But there is some evidence that the root means also 'to be great' (cf. Peters, ad loc.); hence 'his greatness' or 'his pride' would be a legitimate translation.

JOB'S REPLY TO SOPHAR, *xxi.*

*Argument.* The Speech consists of two parts: a) the statement of Job's thesis regarding the prosperity of the wicked, and b) the refutation of the teaching of his opponents.

a) In the first strophe, he deals briefly with his own case, merely stating that he has good reason to be impatient. Then he invites their attention to a problem which causes him dismay, and which will appal them when they have heard it (2-6). This problem is the prosperity of the wicked. He states a thesis which is the exact antithesis of that maintained by the three friends, viz. the wicked have long life, wealth, a numerous family, unharmed by man or God; their cattle are fruitful, their children numerous and happy, and their whole lives one continual round of pleasure (7-12).

b) He then takes up various statements of his opponents and refutes them: 1. 'That the wicked is carried off in the day of calamity' (30-31, 13-15). 2. 'That his prosperity is insecure' (16-21). 3. 'That God is omniscient, and therefore infallible in His judgment' (22-26). 4. 'That the name of the wicked is forgotten' (27-34).

*Strophic arrangement* : 5 : 6 : 5.

*xxi.* 1 And Job answered and said :

- 2 Hear ye attentively my speech,  
And let this be your consolation ;
- 3 Suffer me, that I also may speak,  
And after I have spoken, mock on !
- 4 As for me, is my complaint against man ?  
And why should I not be impatient ?
- 5 Turn to me, and be appalled,  
And lay your hand on your mouth :
- 6 Even when I remember, I am dismayed,  
And my flesh beginneth to shudder :
- 7 Wherefore do the wicked live,  
Increase, nay, wax mighty in wealth ?
- 8 Their seed is established before them,  
Their kinsfolk and their offspring before their eyes ;
- 9 Their houses are safe, without fear,  
The rod of God is not upon them ;
- 10 Their bull gendereth, and faileth not,  
Their cow calveth, and doth not miscarry ;



- 11 They send forth their young ones like a flock,  
And their children dance ;
- 12 They sing to the timbrel and the harp,  
And make merry to the sound of the pipe.
- [30 “ For the wicked is reserved for the day of calamity,  
In the day of wrath he is carried off ”—
- 31 Who doth declare his way to his face ?  
And who doth requite him for what he hath done ?]
- 13 They live out their days in happiness,  
And in peace they descend to Sheol.
- 14 Yet they say to God : Depart from us !  
And we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways !
- 15 What is the Almighty that we should serve Him ?  
And what do we gain if we pray to Him ?
- 16 “ Lo, their happiness is not in their hand,  
The council of the wicked is far from Him ”—
- 17 How often is the light of the wicked put out ?  
Doth their ruin come upon them ?  
Doth He allot pains in His wrath ?
- 18 Are they like stubble before the wind ?  
And like chaff which the storm sweepeth away ?
- 19 “ God layeth up trouble for his children ”—  
Let Him requite himself, that he may know !
- 20 Let his own eyes see his ruin,  
And of the wrath of the Almighty let him drink !
- 21 For what concern hath he in his house after him,  
When the number of his months is ended.
- 22 “ Can one teach God knowledge ?  
And He judgeth those that are high ”—
- 23 One dieth in his full strength,  
Wholly at ease and content ;
- 24 His thighs are full of fat,  
And the marrow of his bones is moist ;
- 25 Another dieth in bitterness of soul,  
And never tasted happiness ;
- 26 Alike they lie down in the dust,  
And the worm covereth them.

- 27 Behold, I know your thoughts,  
 And the devices which ye think out against me :  
 28 For ye say : " Where is the house of the magnate ?  
 And where the tent where the wicked dwelt ? "  
 29 Have ye not asked them that pass by the way ?  
 And do ye not mark their tokens ?  
 32 And he is borne to the grave,  
 And over a mound one keepeth watch ;  
 33 The clods of the valley are sweet to him ;  
 And all men march after him,  
 And before him men without number ;  
 34 How then will ye comfort me with delusion ?  
 And as for your answers, there is left falsehood.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xxi. 8a. 1. עַמִּים (= kinsfolk). M T עַמִּים (connect with 8b.). 10. 1. שׁוֹרֵם, פָּרְתָם, (G. Vulg.). M T שׁוֹרֵם. פָּרְתָם. 12a. 1. בָּתָּף (G. Vulg. Targ. Syr.). M T בָּתָּף. 13a. 1. יָבֵלִי (Qeri and Versions). M T יָבֵלִי. 13b. 1. יִחְתִּי (Sym. Vulg. Targ. Syr.). M T יִחְתִּי. 16b. 1. מִמֶּנִּי (G.) M T מִנִּי. 20a. 1. פִּידִי (G. Vulg. Targ. Syr.). M T פִּידִי. 24a. 1. עֲטִימִי (Syr.). M T עֲטִימִי. 1. חֶלֶב (G. Vulg. Syr.). M T חֶלֶב. 27b. תַּחֲמוֹסִי, חֶמֶת = think. cf. Syr. Targ. 30-31. transp. ante 13. 30b. 1. יוֹבֵל (Syr.). M T יוֹבֵלִי. 33b-c. transp. post 32a ?

## COMMENTARY.

2-6. Job asserts once more that he has good reason to complain; then invites their attention to the awful truth which he is presently to expound—a truth which will appal them, as it shocks himself to recall it, viz. the prosperity of the wicked.

2. He has sought in vain for comforting words from them; let them now attend in silence; he asks no more. (*cf.* xvi. 2).

3. *Mock on.* The verb is in the sing., and if correct, Job addresses Sophar in particular (*cf.* xvi. 3). The Versions, however, have the plural.

4. Job has grounds of complaint against God, who has afflicted him despite his innocence. *Cf.* vi. 2ff. This is the only reference to Job's own case in this speech. He now turns to the general problem which formed the subject-matter of the last speech of each of the three. *My complaint,* *cf.* vii. 11; ix. 27; x. 1; xxiii. 2. *Impatient,* lit. 'Why should not my spirit be short?' *cf.* vi. 11 'to prolong the soul' = to be patient.

5. The truth which he is to expound will fill them with amazement, and awe them into silence. (*Cf.* xxiii. 15ff.) *Turn . . . and be appalled.* This is equivalent to 'if you turn . . . you will be appalled, *Lay your hand,* etc. i.e. be reduced to silence, *cf.* xl. 4.

7-12. The wicked accumulate wealth, they are powerful, their house has nothing to fear from man or God, their cattle are fruitful, their children numerous and happy (*cf.* xii. 6).

7. Instead of being cut off suddenly for their crimes the wicked are allowed to live and prosper. *Increase.* The Heb. word means 'advance,' but not necessarily in years; the context shows there is question of advance in wealth. *Cf.* 'immense (lit. advanced) wealth' Prov. viii. 18.

8. Their power and influence in the community is assured by the numbers of their clan. *Kinsfolk.* The Heb. reads 'with them,' which is superfluous after 'before them.' Most critics eliminate it as a gloss. But a change of pointing gives the word for 'kinsfolk,' and a word is necessary to complete the second half of the verse. This is the very opposite of what Eliphaz (xv. 30-35), Bildad (xviii. 16-19), and Sophar (xx. 26-28) have stated.

9. His house is unmolested by wild animals, or by men, and no calamity befalls him. Eliphaz has said: 'In peace the spoiler shall come upon him' (xv. 21); Job repeats what he has said in xii. 6: 'The tents of the robbers are in security.' *The rod of God* has reference to calamities such as the 'fire from heaven' (i. 16), or 'blight' (v. 5), or drought or floods (xx. 28).

10. Their cattle are fruitful. *Cf.* Ps. cxliv. 13. *Faileth not,* lit. 'showeth not loathing.' But Jewish tradition favours the meaning 'pollute' (i.e. by rejecting the *semen*), from a root found in Aramaic.

11. Their children also are numerous. *Cf.* Ps. cxxvii. 3. 'He maketh him families like a flock' (Ps. cvii. 41).

12. The subject is not the children, but the wicked. Their life is one continuous round of merriment (*cf.* i. 4-5).

30-31, 13-15. You say: 'The wicked is carried off in the day of disaster.' On the contrary, he is not punished at all. He lives out his life in happiness, and dies in old age without suffering. For the transfer of 30-31 see below.

Here Job begins his detailed examination of the main points in the friends' speeches regarding retribution.

30. The quotation gives the substance of the friends' statements regarding the sudden and violent death of the wicked (xv. 22-24; xviii. 14-15, 18; xx. 11, 22, 25).

31. On the contrary, the wicked man is not punished at all!

13. Instead of dying prematurely, as the friends maintain, the wicked live out their lives in happiness (*cf.* v. 26-27 for a description of a ripe and happy old age). *In peace.* They experience none of the torments which the friends associate with the death of the wicked. *They descend.* The Heb. has 'they are scared'; but the Versions, followed by all critics, point the word differently, and read 'descend.'

14-15. The upright man's rule of life is 'fear God and keep His commandments' (Eccles. xii. 13); the wicked refuse to do either, and yet they remain unpunished. *Thy ways*, i.e. Thy commandments.

16-21. You say: 'The prosperity of the wicked will not endure, for God will frustrate his plans.' On the contrary, the wicked man has to endure neither misfortune (17a-b) nor suffering (17c). It is no answer to say that at least his children suffer (19), for their suffering cannot affect the man himself.

16. It is impossible, without emendation, to fit this verse into Job's speech. Hence some, like Peters, omit the negative (*cf.* Greek), and translate: 'Their prosperity is in their hand'; others, like Dhorme, arrive at the same result by making the clause interrogative: 'Is not their prosperity in their hand?' But neither device is necessary if we assume that Job is quoting the words of the three friends. This is certainly true of 19a, and why not here also?

With 16a compare v. 4-5; xv. 21b, 27-29; xviii. 5-6. *Counsel of the wicked.* God will not allow their plans to succeed. *Cf.* v. 12: 'He frustrateth the devices of the crafty, and their hands cannot achieve success' (Eliphaz). Contrast x. 3: 'Thou shinest upon the counsel of the wicked' (Job). *From Him.* The Hebrew has 'from me,' which can hardly be right, whether the words are those of Job or those of the friends. The Greek 'from Him' is preferable. *Cf.* xxii. 18b.

17. The first clause is an echo of xviii. 5a: 'Indeed, the light of the wicked shall be put out' (Bildad). According to Job, it is rarely that the wicked man sinks from affluence to abject

poverty. The third clause creates some difficulty. The word which we have translated 'pains' might also mean 'cords' both in the sense of 'traps' (xviii. 10), and in the sense of 'a measuring line.' There may be an allusion to Bildad's speech in which he speaks of the various 'traps' which beset the sinner's path (xviii. 8-10). But the verb 'divide' or 'allot' does not suit this. In the other sense, it might mean 'gives them His wrath as their portion' (cf. xx. 23b). On the whole, 'pains' is the most probable meaning, although the word is usually employed in the restricted sense of 'birth' pangs. According to Job, not only does the wicked man escape misfortune, but he is without suffering of any sort.

18. This verse also depends on 'how often' of verse 17. Job denies the contention of the friends that the wicked man vanishes completely (cf. xv. 30ff; xviii. 16ff; xx. 7ff). For the figure cf. xx. 7.

19. Job interjects a further objection: 'if he does not suffer himself, at least his children are punished.' Cf. v. 4 (Eliphaz); xx. 10 (Sophar). Job replies that this does not affect the guilty party himself. Actually, if it were true, the innocent would suffer for the guilty.

20. *His own eyes see*; let him experience it himself. *Let him drink.* Cf. Is. li. 17; Jer. xxv. 15.

21. In Sheol the wicked has no knowledge of things of earth and he is therefore not affected if his children suffer. Cf. xiv. 21-22; Eccles. ix. 5-6. *The number of his months*, i.e. the life-span assigned to him.

22-26. 'God is omniscient, and judges even the angels; therefore His judgments are infallible.' Job's reply is that, in fact, God does not judge at all. He apportions suffering and happiness without regard to the merits or demerits of the individual. One sinner dies after a life of happiness, another after a life of misery, and in death both are equal.

22. Job is probably referring to Sophar's argument in xi. 5ff, based on God's omniscience, together with Eliphaz's mention of the impurity of the angels in iv. 18; xv. 15. Cf. xxv. 2; 'who maketh peace in His high places.'

23. In this verse and 25 two classes of men are contrasted. According to Peters, the former describes the fate of the wicked, the latter that of the just. According to Dhorme, there is reference to men in general; death comes to all alike, whether their lives are happy or miserable. But if Job were contrasting the fate of the just and the wicked, he would have made it quite clear, instead of using the vague 'this' . . . 'this.' On the other hand, the fact that death comes to all alike has no bearing on the problem under discussion. It is to be noted that the whole speech deals with the sole topic of the fate of the wicked. Both those described in 23 and those described in 25 are wicked, but not all have the same fate. Job's argument is that if *all* the wicked were afflicted, one might accept the contention that suffering is the reward of sin. But God allots

pleasure and pain without regard to the moral character of the recipient. *In his full strength*, lit. 'in the bone of his perfection.'

24. Cf. 'For they have no pangs, sound and fat is their body' (Ps. lxxiii, 4). *Thighs . . . fat*. The older interpretation was 'his pails are full of milk.' The other is now generally accepted. Cf. 'he hath covered his fate with fatness, and hath put collops of fat on his loins' (xv. 27). The marrow of the bones was regarded as having the same function as the sap of a tree; if it was soft and moist, a man was strong and vigorous, if it became dried up, a man dwindled and died. Cf. Prov. iii. 8: 'it will be healing to thy flesh, and moistening to thy bones.' 25. The terms are chosen to contrast with 23-24. *Bitterness of soul* i.e. pain or sorrow (cf. iii. 20; vii. 11; x. 1). This contrasts with verse 24. The second clause 'never tasted happiness' contrasts with 23.

26. The end of both is the same. Job implies that, just as the wicked man may die without suffering, so a just man like himself may die without receiving his due reward.

27-34. 'The wicked man is punished after death by complete oblivion.' Job answers that the wicked have left memorials which are manifest to all; the wicked man is borne to the grave with great pomp, and a monument marks his resting-place.

27. Job hints that when they spoke of the desolation of the wicked man's abode they were referring to himself. *Conceive*. The Hebrew word usually means 'to treat violently,' and hence we should translate 'the devices wherewith ye do me violence.' But the Syriac took the word as derived from a root meaning 'to think,' and this is more suitable to the context.

28. *For ye say*, i.e. in your hearts, ye think. Job's friends are agreed that the wicked man's house (i.e. his family) is destroyed without leaving a trace or even a memory behind (viii. 14-15; xv. 34; xviii. 21; xx. 26-28). The *magnate*, i.e. the man who has enriched himself by extortion and oppression. '*Tent where the wicked dwelt*,' lit. 'tent, dwelling of the wicked.' Some favour the omission of 'tent' as a gloss.

29. *They that pass by the way* does not mean travellers who have visited foreign countries (Peters, Gray), but the ordinary passer-by, 'the man in the street' (cf. Ps. lxxx. 13; lxxxix. 42; Prov. ix. 15; Lam. i. 12; ii. 15). *Tokens* therefore does not refer to the stories brought back by travellers from abroad, but to the many things which keep alive the memory of the magnate, viz. his family, property, &c. The ordinary passer-by can tell you, and you have the evidence of your own eyes, that the wicked man's memory is not blotted out.

30-31. It is generally agreed that verse 30 in its present form could not have been spoken by Job. Various interpretations have been suggested. a) The usual one is that it represents the testimony of the 'travellers' mentioned in 29, and the text is translated: 'the wicked man is *spared* in the day of calamity, and *in* the day of wrath they are *led forth* (from danger). Apart from the questionable interpretation of the italicised words

the verse in this form does not suit the context, which deals not with the punishment or otherwise of the wicked, but with the survival of his race after his death. b) Many modern commentators emend the text (*cf.* Dhorme, Peters, Ball, Budde, etc.). But the fundamental objection remains that Job is no longer considering the life-time of the wicked, but the circumstances after his death. Taking the verse as it stands, it would fit in better in a much earlier stage of the discourse, and it forms a suitable introduction to the third strophe. It is the statement of the friends which Job refutes in 13-15.

32. He is still honoured when dead. 'He' is the 'magnate' of verse 28. Eliphaz stated that the wicked man is reserved for the sword, destined as food for the vultures (xv. 22-23). Job asserts that, on the contrary, he receives honourable burial, and a monument marks his resting-place. *Over a mound.* The word usually means 'heap of corn,' but here it must mean a heap of earth, a tumulus (*cf.* Ar. *gadatum*, a grave). Apparently, the meaning is that his effigy keeps watch over his tomb. Many critics, however, think a slight change should be made in the text so that it should read: 'and one (or men) keepeth vigil over his tomb,' or 'over him a mound keepeth watch.'

33a. *The clods of the valley* are those which form his grave. Being provided with burial, he is happy even in death. This clause is to be taken with 32.

33b-c. This verse has been variously explained: a) In dying he only shares the lot of all who have gone before or who will come after him; b) the wicked man finds innumerable imitators, as he himself has imitated those who came before him; c) the wicked man is borne to the grave attended by multitudes. The last is by far the most natural, but it is possible that the verse originally followed 32a. *Cf.* the Arabic proverb: 'The bier of a stranger—no man before it or behind it' (*Cf.* Gray, p. 191).

34. Job assesses the value of the speeches of the friends, in so far as they relate to his own case (34a), and in so far as they are answers to the difficulties presented by life in general (34b). In the first case, their comfort is vain, because it presupposes his sin, whereas he is innocent; in the second case, their answers are simply false, as has been shown in detail in this speech.

THIRD CYCLE OF SPEECHES—xxii.—xxxi.

*General character.* The speeches of the three friends in this Cycle are a defence of the justice of God, in Job's case (Eliphaz), in regard to the wicked (Bildad), and in general (Sophar).

Job's replies form a complete resumé of his own case. He rejects their teaching on retribution ; the wicked prosper and the just suffer, because God does not intervene in judgment (xxiii.—xxiv.) ; he himself was once happy and respected, now he is miserable and despised, and God refuses to answer his prayer for redress (xxix.—xxx.), although he is innocent (xxvii. 1-6—xxxi.).



ELIPHAZ'S THIRD SPEECH, xxii.

*Argument.* The Speech consists of two parts : a) Defence of God's action on the ground of His impartiality and His omniscience, and b) advice to Job.

a) God has nothing to gain or lose by man's actions ; He is free from self-interest, and therefore impartial in His judgment. If He has chastised Job, it is not because of his piety, but because of his sins (2-5). It is because he has neglected his obligation to succour the poor, the widow and the orphan, that Job's troubles have come upon him (6-11). For God is omniscient ; His gaze reachest the remotest stars, yet Job impiously claims that He knows nothing of the earth, and that, in consequence, the wicked are allowed to oppress with impunity, and are even blessed with prosperity (12-14, 8, 18).

b) In the second part of his Speech, Eliphaz puts before Job two alternatives : the way of the wicked of old, which will bring ruin to him as it did to them (15-20), and the way of repentance and reconciliation with God (21-25), which will lead to the return of his former happiness (26-30).

*Stropic arrangement : 5 : 5 : 5.*

xxii. 1 And Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said :

2 Can a man be profitable to God,  
That a virtuous man should be profitable to Him ?

. . . . .  
. . . . .

3 Is it of advantage to the Almighty if thou be just,  
Or a gain if thou art upright in conduct ?

4 Is it because of thy piety that He reproveth thee ?  
That He entereth into judgment with thee ?

5 Is not thy wickedness great ?  
And thy iniquities without end ?

6 Because thou hast exacted pledges of thy brethren  
without cause,  
And stripped off the clothes of the naked,

7 Thou hast not given water to the weary,  
And thou hast withholden bread from the hungry,

9 Thou hast let widows go away empty,  
And crushed the arms of the orphan,

- 10 Therefore are snares round about thee,  
And a sudden terror dismayeth thee ;  
11 Thy light is darkened, and thou canst not see,  
And the flood of waters covereth thee.
- 12 Doth not God behold the height of the heavens,  
And the loftiest stars, though high they be ?  
13 Yet thou sayest : " What doth God know ?  
And behind the darkness can He judge ?  
14 Clouds are a covert for Him, and He seeth not,  
And He goeth about the circuit of the heavens ;  
[8 And the man of might possesseth the earth,  
And the powerful dwell therein ;  
18 And He filleth their houses with good things,  
And the counsel of the wicked is far from Him.]"
- 15 Wilt thou keep the old path,  
Which wicked men have trodden,  
16 Who were snatched away before their time,  
Upon whose foundation a stream was poured out ?  
17 Who said to God : " Depart from us ! "  
And " what can the Almighty do to us ? "  
19 The just see it and are glad,  
And the innocent laugh them to scorn :  
20 Surely, their greatness is destroyed,  
And their prosperity a fire hath devoured !
- 21 Be reconciled with Him, and be at peace,  
Thereby shall thy gain be good ;  
22 Receive instruction from His mouth,  
And lay His words in thy heart ;  
23 If thou wouldst return to the Almighty [and] be  
restored,  
Put iniquity far from thy tent,  
24 And cast gold upon the dust,  
And gold of Ophir on the pebbles of the valleys,  
25 And the Almighty will be thy gold,  
And He will be to thee silver in abundance.

- 26 For then thou shalt delight in the Almighty,  
And lift up thy face to God ;  
27 And thou shalt pray to Him, and He will hear thee,  
And thou shalt pay thy vows ;  
28 Shouldst thou purpose a thing, it shall succeed for  
thee,  
And upon thy ways a light shall shine ;  
29 For He abaseth one that speaketh proudly,  
But the lowly of eyes He saveth ;  
30 So doth He rescue an innocent man,  
And he escapeth by the cleanness of his hands.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xxii. 8. transp. post 14? 9b. 1. תִּרְבֵּא (G. Syr. Targ. Vulg.). MT יִרְבֵּא. 11a. 1. אֲוִרָה חֲשֵׁךְ (G.). MT אֲוִ חֲשֵׁךְ. 12b. 1. יִרְאֶה (G.). MT וִירְאֶה. Connect with 12a. 17b. 1. לָנוּ (G. Syr.). MT לָמוֹ. 18. transp. post 14? 18b. 1. מִמֶּנִּי (G.). MT מִנִּי. 20a. 1. קִיָּמָם (G. Vulg. Syr. Targ.). MT קִימָנוּ. 21b. 1. תִּבּוֹאֲתֶךָ (G. Syr. Targ. Vulg.). MT תִּבּוֹאֲתֶךָ. 23a. 1. וְתִבְנֶה. MT תִּבְנֶה. 24b. 1. וּבְצֹר. MT וּבְצֹר. 29a. 1. מִתְאַמֵּר. MT וְתִתְאַמֵּר. 30a. 1. אִישׁ. MT אִי. 30b. 1. כִּפְיוֹ (Syr. Vulg.). MT כִּפְיוֹ.

## COMMENTARY.

2-5. God can neither derive benefit from man's virtue, nor suffer harm by man's sin. He is therefore impartial. He has chastised Job, not for offences against Himself, but for his many sins against his fellow-men.

2. The argument is from the general to the particular: No human being can add anything to the perfection of God, therefore even a pious man (being human) cannot benefit Him by his piety. The translation 'A wise man is profitable to himself' (Gray, Peake, Dhorme, etc.) introduces an idea which is alien to the context, and would have been expressed differently in Hebrew. This is confirmed by reference to Elihu's Speech (xxxv), which presents the same argument in a more developed form. Elihu says that man can neither benefit God by virtue (xxxv. 7), nor injure Him by sin (xxxv. 6). As the strophe here lacks one verse, it is probable that a verse with the same meaning as xxxv. 6 has dropped out after verse 3.

3. Eliphaz now applies the general principle to Job's case. Job seems to think that by his piety he has conferred a favour on God, and that, in return, God is bound to overlook his minor faults. *Upright in conduct*, lit. 'if thou perfectest thy ways.' Cf. iv. 6.

4. But it is not because of any lapse in his duty towards God that Job is chastised. *Because of thy piety*, lit. 'from thy fear.' Eliphaz has already admitted that Job's 'fear' and the 'perfection of his ways' gave him ground for hope (iv. 6).

5. It is his neglect of his obligations towards his fellow-men that has been the cause of his chastisement. But Eliphaz does not contend that Job's sins were deliberate; he was not guilty of positive oppression; his sins were sins of negligence (cf. Elihu's statement on the same lines, in xxxv. 9-12), or the evil effect of acts in themselves perfectly lawful (e.g. taking pledges).

6-11. Examples of Job's 'iniquities' (5): his harsh treatment of debtors, of the hungry and thirsty, of the widow and the orphan. Cf. xxxv. 9-12 (Elihu).

6. *Because*. The principal clause begins with 'therefore' in verse 10. The first crime is concerned with debtors. For a trifling debt (without cause) he took a garment as a pledge, and left the debtor naked. The law permitted the taking of a pledge for debt, but with the proviso that there was to be no harsh treatment (Ex. xxii. 25-26; Deut. xxiv. 12-13). For this reason, a garment taken in pledge had to be restored to its owner before night. The debtor suffered through Job's negligence of this obligation. Cf. Job's repudiation of a similar charge in xxx. 19-20.

7. The second charge: indifference to the needs of the poor. Job repudiates this charge also in xxxi. 16-17. *Weary*, i.e. faint with thirst (cf. Prov. xxv. 25; Is. xxix. 8).

8. This verse interrupts the sequence of thought between verses 7 and 9, and is regarded by many as misplaced. If retained here, it must be taken to mean that Job, while he left the poor to starve, allowed the powerful unrestrained freedom. But this seems to read too much into the text; for nothing is said about Job *conniving* at tyranny. But see after verse 14.

9. The third charge: want of kindness to the orphan and the widow. Job asserts in xxxi. 16-18 that he has always dealt kindly with both classes. *Thou hast sent away empty*, i.e. by refusing them his aid when they were oppressed by the wicked. *Crushed the arm* i.e. deprived of strength by refusing to help them. Cf. 'The arms of the wicked are broken, but Jahweh supporteth the just' (Ps. xxxvii. 17). Compare Isaias' denunciation of the unjust judges who give unjust decisions 'that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey' (Is. x. 2). Elihu repeats this charge in xxxvi. 17.

10-11. Eliphaz applies to Job the terms which Bildad used of the plight of the wicked (xviii. 8-11). The 'snares,' 'terrors,' 'darkness' and 'flood' are all symbols of trouble or calamity. The figure in 11a is borrowed from xviii. 6. The 'flood' is used as a symbol of disaster in xxvii. 20 (cf. Ps. xxxii. 6; lxix. 2). *Thy light is darkened*. Heb. has 'Or darkness seest thou not'; but the Greek reading ('thy light,' and the verb 'is darkened' for 'darkness') is regarded as the original. The second part of verse 11 is repeated in xxxviii. 34; but there it is no longer figurative.

12-14, 8, 18. For nothing is hidden from God. His gaze reaches to the most remote stars in the heavens. Yet Job impiously claims that He knows nothing of the earth, and that, in consequence, the oppressors are not only unmolested, but even blessed with prosperity.

12. Eliphaz, like Sophar (xi. 5-6), emphasises the omniscience of God, and for the same motive, viz. these faults may have escaped Job's attention, but nothing escapes the knowledge of God. *Doth not God behold the height of the heavens?* This is the reading suggested by the Greek. The Hebrew has: 'Is not God the height of heaven, and see the head of the stars that they are high.' The first clause is usually interpreted 'Is not God in the heights of heaven?' But this would be an admission of the complaint attributed to Job in verse 14, viz. that God is so remote that He knows nothing of the earth. Verse 13 rather indicates that a statement of God's omniscience has preceded. This is obtained by reading 'He seeth' with the first clause (Greek). The argument is the same as that more fully developed by Sophar in his first Speech (xi. 7-10) and again in his last (xxv-xxvi. 5-14): God's power and knowledge extend to the highest heavens and to the depths of Sheol, and to the length and breadth of the earth. If He guides the movements of the remotest stars, it is absurd to assert that He knows nothing of what goes on upon earth. The same argument is used by Isaias xl. 26-27: God controls the movements of each

individual star, how can Israel say that God has forgotten him? *The loftiest stars*, lit. 'the head of the stars.' The Greek has a different reading for 12b: 'And He hath humbled them that are carried away by pride.' The parallelism favours the Hebrew.

13. Job has not actually used these words in his speeches; but Eliphaz attributes to him the mentality of the wicked (*cf.* Ps. lxxiii, 11; Is. xxix. 15). What Job has said is not that God *cannot* judge, but that in fact He *does not* judge the wicked (xxi. 22ff). In a later Speech, however, he makes a statement similar to that attributed to him here (xxiii. 17).

14. *Cf.* xxiii. 17. God dwells in the clouds, which are His chariot (Ps. xviii, 11), but hide the earth from His gaze. *Circuit* (*cf.* xxvi, 10; Prov. viii. 27). The meaning is that God moves with the clouds across the heavens, but never descends to earth.

If verse 8 be inserted here, it would describe the result of God's want of knowledge: the wicked have a free hand, and might becomes right (*cf.* xii. 6).

Verse 18 also obtains a natural interpretation if inserted here. According to the view which Eliphaz attributes to Job, God being unaware of the crimes of the wicked 'fills their houses with good things,' instead of punishing them for their crimes. *Cf.* xii. 6; xxi. 7-12.

15-20. Is Job going to join the ranks of the wicked by refusing to repent? Let him take warning by their fate.

15. The best commentary on this and the following strophes is supplied by Elihu's speech on the suffering of the just (xxxvi. 11ff). Job is a 'just man' who has been chastised for some sins of negligence or inadvertence. If he refuse to repent, he joins the category of the 'wicked' and must share their fate. *The old path.* Eliphaz seems to have in mind some particular category of the wicked, and some critics (e.g. Dhorme, Peters) think that there is reference to those destroyed in the Deluge. But the writer employs the symbol of a 'flood' in xx. 28, and xxvii. 20 as the agent of destruction of the wicked in general.

16. *Cf.* xxxvi. 14. The meaning of the first part of the verse is clear: they were carried off prematurely by a sudden catastrophe. The second clause is obscure. Grammatically, it may mean either a) 'upon whose foundation a stream was poured out,' or b) 'whose foundation was poured out as a stream.' The former is supported by xxii. 28: 'A flood shall sweep away his house.' The whole family perished with them.

17. In his description of the sinners of old Eliphaz uses Job's own language; for 17a = xxi. 14a, and 17b = xxi. 15. *To us.* Heb. has 'to them' an abrupt change to indirect discourse. But the Greek is certainly correct.

18. In 18a Eliphaz seems to say that God 'fills the houses of the wicked with good things.' It is very difficult to conceive how Eliphaz could make a statement so utterly contradictory of all his principles. If the text is sound, it must belong to the section 13-14, in which Eliphaz is quoting what he alleges are

Job's opinions. God fills their houses with good things because He is unaware of their iniquity.

The second part of the verse is repeated from xxi. 16b. In the latter case, Job quotes it as the statement of the friends, here Eliphaz (if 18 be placed with 13-14) quotes it as a statement of Job. But the meaning is somewhat different. In the mouth of the friends (xxi. 16), it means that God does not help the counsel of the wicked; in the mouth of Job (here) it means that He is not aware of their iniquity. He is so remote that he knows nothing of their plans, and so 'fills their houses with good things.' *Far from Him*. As in xxi. 16, the Hebrew has 'from me,' but the other reading is required by the context in each case.

19. This verse is to be connected with verse 17. The innocent rejoice at God's intervention to punish the wicked, because it 'gives hope' to the upright (v. 16). (cf. Ps. lii. 8; lxix. 33; cvii. 42). With this verse compare xvii. 8 and xviii. 21.

20. This verse is probably to be taken as expressing the 'scorn' of the just (cf. xviii. 21). *Greatness*. The word does not occur elsewhere. Many critics substitute the word for 'substance' or 'affluence' used in Gen. vii. 4, and Deut. xi. 6. The root means 'to rise up' hence 'success' or 'greatness' (cf. the formation of the noun 'height' from a synonymous verb in xv. 31; xx. 6), *prosperity*, lit. 'excess.' In Ps. xvii. 14 it means 'wealth'; but here it has a wider meaning: success, happiness, prosperity. Cf. iv. 21; xxx. 11.

21-25. The other alternative: by reconciliation with God he can recover his happiness. The way to reconciliation is repentance.

21. Cf. v. 11, 17ff. *Thereby*, lit. 'by them,' i.e. by reconciliation and peace.

22. Cf. v. 17; 'Refuse not then the chastening of the Almighty.' The latter passage shows that the 'instruction' is the warning contained in his sufferings. Cf. xxxiii. 13ff; 18ff; xxxvi. 8-15.

23. The means of reconciliation: repentance and renunciation of iniquity. *And be restored*. Job has lost God's friendship, and, in consequence, has been 'pulled down' (xix. 10); if he wishes to recover God's friendship and be 'built up' i.e. achieve the reconciliation and its fruit mentioned in 21, he must repent. The Hebrew has 'If thou wilt return to the Almighty, thou wilt be built up'; but this is stated already in 21. Hence many critics prefer the Greek reading 'thou must humble thyself.' But the simplest emendation is merely to insert the conjunction, and make the apodosis begin in 23b. *Put iniquity, etc.* Cf. If iniquity be in thy hand, put it far away, and let not injustice dwell in thy tent.'

24. Eliphaz suggests that Job's sins have been the result of attachment to his wealth. Job repudiates this charge in xxxi. 24. Compare Elihu's accusation that he was seduced by comfort and his 'table full of fatness' (xxxvi. 16). He must not let his wealth come between him and the friendship of God; he must rather cast it away as an unclean thing.

25. The friendship of God, which he will gain by repentance, will be more precious than gold or silver. *Silver in abundance*, lit. 'eminence' (Ps. xcv. 4; Num. xxiii. 22; xxiv. 8). Cf. 'The Law is to be more desired than gold' (Ps. xix. 10). The thought of this verse is developed in the next strophe.

26-30. The blessings which will follow repentance: he will be restored to God's friendship, and he will be prosperous (cf. 21).

26. The old relations of friendship will be restored. Cf. xxvii. 10; the wicked man does not 'delight in the Almighty' nor 'call upon God at all times.'

27. *Thy vows*, i.e. thy vows of thanksgiving for favours received.

28. Everything he undertakes will prosper (cf. Ps. i. 2). Instead of the darkness which now envelops him (11. xix. 8), light will shine upon his path (cf. xi. 17).

29. The Hebrew of 29a 'When they humble thee, thou shalt say 'pride,' ' does not form a good parallel to 29b, and is generally regarded as corrupt. The parallelism and the contrast with verse 30 suggests the text translated above, which necessitates but a slight change. Cf. xxxvi. 12-14.

30. This verse is also slightly corrupt. Hebrew: 'He delivereth him that is *not* innocent, and he is delivered through the cleanness of *thy* hands.' The first part of the verse is impossible; but a simple change gives 'innocent *man*' instead of '*not* innocent,' which is the antithesis required by 29. In the second clause, the chief question is to decide whether it is a general statement like 29-30a, or one addressed to Job: '*He* shall escape through the cleanness of *his* hands,' or '*Thou* wilt escape through the cleanness of *thy* hands.' Syriac and Vulg. have '*his* hands'; the Hebrew is inconsistent, having both the third person (he) and the second (thy). The third person is more probable, since he is stating a general principle. With 29-30 compare v. 12-16, and also xxxvi. 11-15 (Elihu).



## JOB'S REPLY TO ELIPHAZ, xxiii.-xxiv.

*Argument.* The Speech consists of two parts : a) the absence of retribution in Job's case, and b) the absence of retribution in general.

a) Job continues to protest against the wrong which he has to suffer ; if he could meet God in judgment, he is convinced that he could establish his innocence (2-7). But search where he will, God still eludes him. If He knew of Job's innocence, or if He investigated his case, He would have treated him differently. But God has decreed his lot without regard to his merits or demerits, and his is but one of many such cases (8-14). It is this absence of retribution that troubles him : the wicked oppress the poor with impunity, while he, an innocent man, is afflicted, because he is hidden from God by the darkness (15-17 ; xxiv. 2-4).

b) This being so, why does not God appoint special times for investigation and judgment ? For the just endure poverty and slavery, cold and hunger and thirst ; while the wicked are guilty of strife and oppression, murder, adultery and theft (12-16). It is because God does not punish the guilty that the wicked despise His law. If He were aware of their crimes, He would quickly reduce them to poverty, and wipe out their families (12c-13, 17-19). As things are, the tyrant who oppresses the widow has long life and immunity from misfortune ; if God were aware of the crimes of the wicked, they would be stricken down suddenly and prematurely (21-25).

*Strophic arrangement* : 6 : 7 : 6.

xxiii. 1 And Job answered and said :

- 2 Even to-day is my complaint rebellious,  
And my hand is heavy on my groaning ;
- 3 Oh that I knew where I might find Him,  
That I might come unto His tribunal !
- 4 I would institute a suit before Him,  
And fill my mouth with arguments ;
- 5 I would know the words with which He would  
answer me,  
And understand what He would say to me ;
- 6 Would He contend with me in the greatness of His  
might ?  
No, even He would attend to me.
- 7 There an upright man would argue with Him,  
And I should win outright my suit.

- 8 Lo, I go eastward, but He is not there,  
And westward, but perceive Him not ;  
9 I seek Him to the northward, but I see Him not,  
I turn to the southward, but behold Him not ;  
10 But if He knew the way that is mine,  
If He tried me, I should come forth as gold ;  
11 My foot hath held fast to His steps,  
His way I have kept, without turning aside ;  
12 From the command of His lips I have not gone back,  
In my bosom I have cherished the words of His  
mouth.  
13 But He hath chosen, and who can turn Him back ?  
And His soul hath desired, and He will perform ;  
14 For He will accomplish what He hath decreed for me,  
And many things like these are in His mind.

- 15 Therefore am I dismayed before Him,  
When I consider, I am afraid of Him :  
[xxiv. 2 [The wicked] remove landmarks,  
They seize a flock and tend it,  
3 The orphan's ass they drive away,  
And the widow's ox they take in pledge ;  
4 They turn aside the poor from the way,  
The meek of the land are hidden ;]  
16 And God hath made my heart faint,  
And the Almighty hath dismayed me,  
17 Because to Him I am blotted out by the  
darkness,  
And from me the gloom hath veiled Him.

- xxiv. 1 Why are not times appointed by the Almighty ?  
And why do they that know Him not see  
His days ?  
5 Like wild asses in the desert they go forth,  
By their labour they seek food,  
They work to get bread for their children.  
6 In a field that is not theirs they reap,  
And the vineyard of the wicked they glean ;

- 7 They pass the night naked, without clothing,  
And have no covering in the cold ;  
8 They are wet with the rain of the mountains,  
And for want of shelter embrace a rock ;  
10 They go about naked, for want of clothing,  
And, while hungry, carry the sheaves ;  
11 Between the vine-rows they pass the noon-tide,  
They tread the wine-presses, and are thirsty.

- 12 From out the city the dying groan,  
And the soul of the wounded crieth out ;  
[9 Men seize the orphan from the breast,  
And take in pledge the infant of the poor ;]  
14 Before daylight, the murderer riseth,  
That he may kill the poor and needy ;  
15 The eye of the adulterer watcheth for the twilight,  
Saying : No eye shall see me,  
And he putteth a covering on his face ;  
[14c And in the night the thief goeth about,]  
16 In the dark he breaketh into houses ;  
By day they shut themselves in,  
They know not the light.

- [12c And God regardeth not folly,  
13 Those became as rebels against the light ;  
They regard not His ways,  
They turn not into His paths ;]  
17 If He examined them, one and all,  
If He knew the terrors of death-shade,  
18 He would be swift upon the face of the waters,  
Their portion in the land would be accursed ;  
Their vineyard would not bear fruit because of  
drought,  
19 And their gardens the snow-waters would sweep  
away ;  
If [God] examined the sinner,

- 20 The womb would forget him, and he would be  
plucked out,  
His greatness would be remembered no more,  
And iniquity would be broken like a tree.
- 21 He maltreated the barren, that beareth not,  
And was not kind to the widow,  
22 Yet the tyrant prolongeth his days,  
By his might he hath success ;  
And when he believed not in his life,  
23 He is given security, and is sustained ;  
If His eyes were upon their ways,  
24 They would be exalted for a while, then they would  
be no more,  
They would sink down, shrivel up like the mallow,  
And wither like an ear of corn ;  
25 And if it be not so, who will prove me a liar,  
And show my words to be false ?

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xxiii. 6b. 1. יִשְׁמַע (Dhorme). M T יִשִּׁים. 7b. 1. מִשְׁפָּטִי (8 MSS. G. Syr. Vulg.). M T מִשְׁפָּטִי. 9a. 1. בִּקְשָׁתִּי (Syr.). M T בִּעֲשָׁתִּי. 9b. 1. אֶעֱטָה (Vulg. Syr.). M T יַעֲטָה. 12a. 1. מִמְצוֹת (G. Vulg.). M T מִצּוֹת. 1. לֹא (G<sup>A</sup>. Vulg.). M T וְלֹא. 12b. 1. בִּחְקִי (G. Vulg.). M T מִחְקִי. 13a. 1. בָּחַר. (G.). M T בָּפָה. 17a. 1. לֹא. M T לֹא. 17b. 1. בָּפָה. M T בָּפָה. xxiv. 2-4. transp. post xxiii. 15. 2a. insert רִשְׁעִים (G.) ? 5a. 1. הֵן (G. Vulg. Syr.) or הֵן כִּי. M T הֵן. 5b. 1. שִׁחֲרוּ ? M T מִשְׁחֲרוּ (כִּי dittogr.). 5c. 1. עָבְדוּ לִי (cf. Vulg. = עָרְכוּ). M T עָרְבָה לֹא. 6a. 1. בְּלִי לָמוֹ. M T בְּלִילוֹ. 8b. 1. צוּר ? M T צוּר. 9. transp. post 12. 9a. 1. מִשֵּׁר (G.). M T מִשֵּׁר. 9b. 1. וְעַל. M T וְעַל. 11a. 1. שׁוֹרְתִים. M T שׁוֹרְתִים. 12a. 1. מִתִּים (Syr.). M T מִתִּים. 12c-13. transp. post 16 (cf. Dhorme). 13c. 1. יִשְׁבּוּ (G. Vulg. Syr.) or יִחְשְׁבוּ (Ps. cxliv. 3). M T יִשְׁבּוּ. 14a. 1. לֹא-אוֹר. M T לֹא-אוֹר. 14c. 1. יִהְיֶה גִנֵּב. M T כִּנְנֵב. 17a. 1. בָּקָר (Syr.). M T בָּקָר. Omit צִלְמוֹת (cf. 17b). 18a. 1. עַל פְּנֵי-מִים ? M T עַל פְּנֵי-מִים. 18c. 1. יִפְרָה כְרֶמֶס. 19a. 1. לֹא יִפְנֶה דָרֶךְ בְּרָמִים : צִיָּה (cf. G.). M T צִיָּה. 19b. 1. שָׁאֵל אֵל. M T שָׁאֵל. 20a. 1. וַיִּנְתֵּק וְ. M T מִתְקוֹ. 20b. 1. חֲטָא. M T חֲטָא. 21a. 1. הִרְעָה (G. Targ.). M T רָעָה. 22a. 1. אֲבִירִים. M T אֲבִירִים. 22b. 1. בָּחֲיוֹ (G. Targ. Vulg.). M T בָּחֲיוֹ. 24a. 1. אֵינָם. M T אֵינָם. 24b. 1. כְּמִלְחָה (G.). M T כְּמִלְחָה.

## COMMENTARY.

2-7. As his sorrows persist, he continues to complain. If only he could meet God in judgment, he would surely prove his innocence.

2. *Even to-day.* This seems to imply that the discussion lasted more than a day, and that possibly a day was devoted to each cycle of the Debate. But it might mean nothing more than 'even still' (*cf.* the use of 'to-day' = now, 1 S. ix. 27; 1 K. xxii. 5; Is. lviii. 4). Even still, despite all their arguments, he has good reason to complain. *Rebellious.* *Cf.* 'my soul refuseth to be quiet' (vi. 7). His whole being revolts against the unjust suffering which he has to undergo. *My hand.* The Greek and Syriac have 'His hand,' i.e. despite what I suffer already, God still afflicts me. But the parallelism favours the Hebrew. He finds it impossible to repress the groans which are nature's protest against his suffering.

3. *Cf.* ix. 34f; xiii. 15-18. *Tribunal, cf.* Vulg. *solium*; some critics translate by 'residence,' 'dwelling.'

4. He would speak in his own defence, and use convincing arguments to prove his innocence.

5. The result would be a foregone conclusion; he knows what God's reply must necessarily be. Or, possibly, he would be able to answer any charge which God would make against him.

6. Would such a trial result in a sentence of condemnation and punishment? No, his arguments would convince even God, though He is omniscient. *In the greatness of His might.* According to xxx. 18, God now contends with him 'in the greatness of His might'; He would not do so after a fair trial. *Even He.* The friends have emphasised God's omniscience in arguing that Job has committed sins of which he himself is unconscious (ix. 5ff; xv. 7-8; xxii. 12-13). Job asserts that notwithstanding His omniscience He will find nothing to disprove his claim to innocence. *Would attend to me,* i.e. would be convinced. The phrase is usually understood as equivalent to the more usual 'he will set his heart on me' with the word 'heart' omitted (*cf.* Is. xli. 20). But as this requires a different preposition, we should probably read 'he shall hear' with Graetz and Dhorme. With the preposition the word means 'obey,' hence 'be convinced' (*cf.* Ox. Lex. s. v. 1, m; 2, e).

7. *Cf.* xiii. 16: 'Even this must be my salvation: that it is not an impious man that cometh before Him.' Job's innocence would assure him victory in the suit. *My suit.* This is the reading of Greek, Vulg. and probably Syr., and is to be preferred to the Hebrew 'I would be delivered for ever from my adversary.' Job is still convinced of God's justice. If he could make God aware of his troubles, he is confident that they would be removed.

8-12. But God eludes his search. If He but knew his conduct, or investigated his case, He would recognise his innocence. But

He has uttered an unalterable decree in Job's case without regard to his merits or demerits.

8. Cf. ix. 11; Ps. cxxxix. 5, 7-10.

9. *I seek Him*. So Syriac. The Hebrew 'when He worketh' is certainly corrupt. Similarly, the first person '*I turn*' (Syr. Vulg.) is better than '*He turneth*' (Heb.)

10. The second member of the verse shows that we have here two conditional clauses (cf. Jouon, 167, i). Job has now come to the conclusion that God must not be aware of what goes on upon earth (cf. xxi. 22). He reasserts the view attributed to him by Eliphaz in xxii. 13-14, that man's actions are hidden from God by a veil of darkness. *The way* i.e. the conduct. Many critics (Houbigant, Dhorme, Peters, etc.) emend to '*my way and my standing*' (cf. Ps. cxxxix. 1-3); but the context and the terms used in the latter passage are different. For the metaphor in Job cf. Ps. xii. 7; lxvi. 10; Prov. xvii. 3.

11. He has been unswerving in his fidelity to God's law. Cf. Ps. xvii. 4-5. *Steps*, i.e. the path prescribed by Him.

12. This verse is no mere repetition of verse 11. The latter refers to conduct, this verse to disposition of mind. Cf. Ps. cxix. 11.

13. Without taking any account of man's merits, God has decreed his fate. *Hath chosen*. So the Greek. The Hebrew 'in one' i.e. He is the same (cf. Vulg. *ipse enim solus est*) is corrupt.

14. On account of God's decree, Job's sufferings must continue to the end, notwithstanding his innocence. *What He hath decreed for me*. Lit. 'my decree.' Vulg. and Syr. have '*His decree*.' *Many things like these*. Job's is no unusual case; there are many instances of the absence of just retribution. This leads on to the discussion of the general problem. Cf. x. 15ff, xxx. 23.

15-17 and xxiv. 2-4. The problem of the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the just. The wicked are allowed to pursue their career of crime unmolested, while Job, an innocent man, is afflicted, because his case is hidden from God.

15. This verse closely resembles xxi. 6, which gives the clue to its interpretation. The thought which 'dismayed' Job, and 'make him shudder,' according to xxi. 16, is the fact that the wicked prosper. Similarly, that which now 'dismays' him, and 'makes him afraid' is the absence of retribution. Unfortunately, the passage referring to the prosperity of the wicked (xxiv. 2-4) has been torn from its original place. If inserted here, it makes the mention of 'God' in 16 intelligible, whereas at present it is unnatural seeing that God is the subject of verse 15. For the commentary on xxiv. 2-4, see below.

16. God, while leaving the wicked unmolested, has discouraged and terrified Job, who is without sin.

17. This verse is a well-known *crux interpretum*. Lit. 'For I am not destroyed because of the darkness, and because of

my face (or, from me) the gloom hath concealed.' It would be impossible and useless to discuss the countless emendations that have been proposed. That suggested here makes no departure from the consonantal text, and merely demands two slight changes in the vowel points. The same darkness which has prevented Job from finding God, prevents God from seeing Job. This thought, which is a development of verse 8, is again emphasised in xxiv. 17ff. Cf. xxii. 14.

xxiv. 1-11. Seeing that God seems to be unaware of the doings of the wicked, why does He not intervene at intervals to judge mankind, to punish the sinner and protect the just? For the latter are robbed and enslaved, unclothed and unhoused, exposed to hardship and hunger and thirst. Elihu deals with this problem in xxxiv. 23.

The text of the whole of this chapter is in considerable disorder. Not only individual words have suffered corruption, but several passages (2-4, 9, 12c-13, 14c) have been misplaced. The whole reconstruction attempted here is largely conjectural.

1. *Appointed.* The word may be translated 'laid up' as in xv. 20, xxi. 19, or 'hidden' as in x. 23 xvii. 4. The latter is the interpretation of the Greek, which omits the negative: 'Why are times hidden from the Almighty?' This is accepted by some critics, who claim that the negative was added in the Hebrew for dogmatic reasons. On the other hand, if Elihu in xxxiv. 23 is alluding to this passage, it is a strong argument in favour of the Hebrew. *Times*, i.e. appointed times for investigation and judgment (cf. xxxiv. 23). *They that know Him*, i.e. the just (cf. xviii. 21). If God intervened in judgment, the just would see His days, i.e. His intervention in their favour (cf. 'day of Jahweh' in Is. ii. 12; xiii. 6, 9).

2. These verses (2-4) interrupt the connection between verses 1 and 5. The latter describes the sufferings of 'them that know Him.' The passage should be probably transferred to the previous strophe after verse 15. *Remove landmarks*, i.e. in order to incorporate the poor man's land in their own estates. This was strictly condemned by the Law (Deut. xix. 14; xxvii. 17; cf. Prov. xxii. 28; xxiii. 10). The king of Assyria boasted that he had 'removed the bounds or peoples' i.e. seized their territory (Is. x. 13). As the line is too short, Greek may be right in supplying the subject 'wicked men' (cf. Vulg. 'others'). *And tend it*, i.e. they are allowed by God to retain what they have seized. The Greek has 'and its shepherd.'

3. The widow and the orphan, the meek and the poor were the natural victims of the oppressor. The *ass* and the *ox* were employed to cultivate the ground (Is. xxx. 34), and their removal rendered tillage more difficult. Cf. xxii. 6, 9.

4. *Turn aside from the way* does not mean simply disregard their rights in the public highway (Dhorme), but 'oppress' or deprive of their just rights in general. Cf. Amos ii. 7: 'turn aside the way of the meek,' and Mal. iii. 5: 'turn aside the stranger' in the same sense. Job, in the statement attributed



to him by Eliphaz, contended that 'the man of might possesseth the land, and the powerful dwell therein' (xxii. 8). *Are hidden*, are of no account. Their rights are not considered.

5. This verse, particularly the final clause, is very corrupt. Lit. 'Behold, wild asses in the desert they go forth by their work seeking for food, the steppe to him bread for the young men.' The obscurity of the passage has led to the omission of some words by the Versions. Thus, LXX omitted from 'seeking' to the end; Syriac omits 'the steppe to him': the Vulgate 'to him.' Most of the corrections proposed are arbitrary in the extreme, and in many cases, amount to a re-writing of the whole passage.

Instead of 'behold,' the Greek has 'like' and this is generally accepted as representing the original reading. With this change, the first two clauses present no further difficulty. The poor, deprived of their possessions, have to seek a living by working for the wealthy. *Like wild asses*. Unlike the domestic ass, which is fed at its master's manger (Is. i. 3), the wild ass has to roam the desert for his food (xxxix. 5-8). He is thus the symbol of the landless poor who have to wander about in search of food. *By their work*. The Versions take this with the preceding, owing to the influence of Ps. civ. 23: 'go forth to their work'; but this presupposes a different reading. It should be taken with the following: having no property, they have to work for others.

The third clause is more difficult. Theodotion agrees with the Hebrew; the other Versions give no assistance. We must have recourse to conjecture. The word 'steppe' is the usual synonym of 'desert,' and this fact may have led to its introduction here. Both Theod. and Vulg. read a verb, and the context suggests 'the work'. Cf. 'They that were full before have hired out themselves for bread.' (1 Sam. ii. 5). The hardships endured by these slaves of the wealthy are described in the following verses.

6. They become the hirelings of the wealthy, labouring in other men's fields and vineyards. *Not theirs*. This is the reading suggested by the Versions (Greek, Vulg. Syr, Targ.). The Hebrew has 'fodder.' The meaning in this case would seem to be that the poor had to subsist on the gleanings of the corn which the Law prescribed should be left for the poor and the stranger (Lev. xix. 9-10; xxiii. 22). But the word means 'mixed grain,' and does not accurately describe the gleanings of the corn. Dhorme's emendation 'in the night' is improbable, for it implies that the poor obtained the necessities of life by stealing.

7-8. The just are without covering for the night, and homeless, exposed to the cold and the rain. *Embrace a rock*. They have to lie on the bare ground or in the shelter of a rock. Cf. Lam. iv. 5: 'They who were brought up in scarlet embrace dunghills.' This passage suggests that instead of 'rock' (*súr*) the original reading may have been 'gravel' (*sór*) i.e. they have to lie on the bare ground.

9. This verse clearly interrupts the description of the homeless

poor, and is generally regarded as misplaced. Gray and Dhorme place it after verse 3. But the repetition of the words 'seize,' 'orphan' and 'pledge' make this unlikely. In verse 12 we have the beginning of a new series of crimes, those perpetrated in the city. Instead of the 'orphan's ass' and the 'widow's ox' which are seized from the peasants, the tyrants in the city seize the young children. The verse should probably be placed after 14. There is a slight corruption in the Hebrew, which reads 'and *upon* the poor they take in pledge.' A change of pointing gives 'infant' instead of 'upon' (Kamphausen).

10. *Naked*, i.e. clad only in a loin-cloth, like a slave. They gather the corn for their masters, while they themselves suffer hunger (*cf.* vii. 2; xiv. 6).

11. They have to endure the torrid heat of the noon-day, and tread the wine-presses of their masters, while they themselves suffer thirst. The second part of the verse is clear. It is natural to suppose that the first also deals with the labours of the vineyard. *Between the rows*. The meaning of the word is doubtful: either 'walls' (Gen. xlix. 22; 2 Sam. xxii. 30) or 'vine-rows' (Jer. v. 10). As the form is feminine, the latter is the more probable. *They pass the noon-day*, i.e. they have to continue their labours during the heat of the day. The verb is derived from the word for 'noon' and is found again in Eccles. xliii. 3. Many modern scholars derive the verb from the word for 'oil,' hence 'press out the oil.' But there is no evidence of the existence of this verb.

12-16. The disorders in the city: Strife and oppression, murder, adultery and theft.

12. The two preceding strophes described the wickedness which prevailed in the country districts (*cf.* Os. iv. 2; Jer. vii. 9); here he turns to deal with the life of the city. *The dying*. This is the reading of the Syriac, and is supported by the parallelism ('wounded'). The Hebrew has 'men' (different pointing). The dead and wounded are the result of tribal or party quarrels.

12c-13. The pronoun 'those' in 13 must refer to persons already mentioned; but, as it cannot refer to the 'dying' and 'wounded' in v. 12, Dhorme is probably right in placing this verse after the catalogue of the wicked (after 16). This applies to 12c likewise, for it forms the parallel to 13a. *Regardeth not*, i.e. does not punish (*cf.* i. 22; iv. 18). Because their crimes are not punished, the wicked become hardened in sin, and openly despise God's law (*cf.* Eccles. viii. 11). *They turn not*. This is the reading of the Versions, which critics generally prefer to the Hebrew 'abide not.' They have chosen the paths of sin, and never turn aside towards God's ways.

14. The murderer. As the murderer is included among those who work in the dark and hate the light (16b-c), we should probably read 'before daylight' (lit. 'not light') instead of 'in daylight' (lit. 'in the light') of the text. With the second

part of the verse compare Ps. xi. 2 : ' that they may shoot in the darkness the upright of heart.'

The third clause of the verse is generally regarded as the misplaced parallel to 16a. For ' he becometh like ' read ' goeth about.'

15. The adulterer. The adulterer chooses the night-fall (*cf.* Ecclus. xxiii. 25-26), in order to escape detection, and disguises himself as a further precaution.

14c-16a. The thief. The thief works by night. *He breaketh into*, lit. ' diggeth ' (*cf.* Matt. vi. 20).

16b-c. All these criminals—the murderer, the adulterer and the thief—choose the night for their crimes, and shut themselves up by day. *Cf.* xxxviii. 15 : ' from the wicked their light is withdrawn ' i.e. darkness is to them what daylight is for other men. *Shut themselves up*, lit. ' seal themselves ' (*cf.* xxxvii. 7). Some critics take the word in the sense of ' mark,' ' designate,' i.e. by day they fix on the scene of their crime. But the parallel clause favours the common view. *They know not*. Darkness is the natural element of the wicked (*cf.* xxxviii. 15).

12c-13, 17-19. God takes no notice of the crimes of the wicked, with the result that they openly despise His law. Surely, if He were aware of these crimes, or if He investigated them, their fate would be different : they would meet with misfortune ; their land would be accursed (18a-b), their vineyards made unfruitful by drought (18c), their gardens washed away by floods (19a).

The close resemblance between this passage and the friends' description of the fate of the wicked (viii. 11ff ; xv. 21ff ; xviii. 5ff ; xx. 6ff) is obvious ; and it is not surprising that critics generally are inclined to regard it as part of the speech of Bildad or Sophar. But, as we shall see, Job is not describing what actually happens in real life. He has stated already that God does not punish the crimes of the wicked (12c-13), because the actions of men are hidden from Him by the darkness (xxiii. 7 ; *cf.* xxii. 13f). But if He appointed times of judgment (xxiv. 1), and thus became aware of their crimes, their fate would be such as the friends describe. The meaning of the whole passage turns upon the interpretation of verses 17, 19b and 23b, and it is the failure to see that these clauses are conditional that has led critics to the conclusion that the passage could not have been spoken by Job.

12c-13. For commentary see above.

17. The Hebrew has :

For altogether *morning* is to them *death-shade*,  
For he knoweth the terrors of *death-shade*.

At first sight, this seems like a continuation of the thought of verse 16—as the night is favourable for their crimes, they dread the morning as much as other men dread the darkness, and night has no terrors for them. This is the interpretation generally adopted. But the text is suspect on several grounds :

a) the repetition of the word 'death-shade,' which is indispensable in 17b, but overloads the line in 17a; b) the use of the singular 'he knoweth'; c) the want of connection between 17 and 18. Now, the Syriac reads a verb 'examine' instead of 'morning' (a change of pointing only), which forms a parallel to 'he knoweth,' and if we accept this, and omit superfluous 'death-shade' in 17a we get two parallel clauses.

Because (or if) He examineth them, one and all,  
Because (or if) He knoweth the terrors of death-shade.

Is the particle to be translated 'because' or 'if'? If the former, Job is not the speaker; if the latter, there can be no objection to our assigning the passage to Job. Fortunately, we have in this very speech a passage which is identical in structure and cognate in meaning, viz. xxiii. 10: 'If He knew the way that is mine, if He tried me, I should come forth as gold.' According to Job, the absence of retribution in his own case, and in the case of the wicked, is due to the same cause, viz. God does not intervene to judge the actions of men. But if He did intervene, he himself would obtain the reward of his innocence, and the wicked the penalty of their crimes. The close analogy between the two passages justifies us in interpreting verse 17 as two conditional clauses, of which the apodosis begins in 18.

18. Gray speaks of the rest of this chapter as 'these corrupt, difficult, ambiguous and unintelligible verses.' The text is indeed very corrupt, and the meaning in many cases obscure; nevertheless, with a few changes, the most important of which have the support of the LXX, the original can be restored with practical certainty.

*He would be swift.* The pronoun, particularly in view of the use of the plural (*their* portion) in 18b, cannot refer to the wicked. It refers to God, the subject of verse 17. The precise meaning of the phrase is obscure. If the text is correct, it probably refers to the coming of God in the thunderclouds which rise out of the sea (*cf.* Ps. xviii. 9ff; civ. 3). A slight emendation would give us 'against them' instead of 'upon the face of the waters', i.e. the wicked. *Their portion in the land.* Their lands would prove unproductive, as described in the next verse. The loss of prosperity is an invariable feature in the description of the fate of the wicked (xv. 29; xviii. 5-7; xx. 6-10; 22; xxvii. 16-18).

18c-19a. Hebrew: 'He (or one) turneth not the way of their vineyard; drought, likewise heat, sweep away the snow-waters.' Bicknell's suggestion that we should read 'treader' for 'way' has been eagerly seized on by modern critics as providing the clue to the interpretation of this very difficult verse: 'No treader (of grapes) turneth towards their vineyard.' But, as Ehrlich has pointed out, we should have expected 'grape-gatherer' instead of 'treader'; and the word 'way' is necessary in any case. The Greek text has not received the attention

it deserves. It can be traced to an original 'Their vineyard shall not be fruitful because of drought,' and the origin of the present Hebrew from this can be easily explained. The mistake of one letter produced 'turn' instead of 'be fruitful,' and the word 'way' was then inserted. The other Greek Versions agree with the LXX in taking the word 'drought' (19a) with 18c.

Verse 19a is still more difficult. The verb 'sweep away' or 'seize' is not appropriate to express the drying up of the waters by the heat; but most appropriate if 'snow-waters' is subject. If we attach the word 'drought' to 18b (with Greek), and read 'their garden' for 'likewise heat' (actually a slight change, with some support from the Greek), we obtain a very natural parallel to 18b: 'the snow-waters sweep away their garden.' The whole verse is a description of the 'curse' which falls on the land of the wicked; drought ruins their vineyards, and the heavy rains of winter sweep away the soil of their gardens down to the valleys. Cf. 'As the storm-flood washeth away the dust of the earth' (xiv. 19). Sophar also speaks of the destruction of the property of the wicked by the storm-floods (xx. 28).

19b-20a. The wicked would be bereft of posterity. As elsewhere, the ruin of the wicked involves his family as well as his possessions. Cf. xv. 30; xviii. 16-19; xx. 26; xxvii. 14-15. But the text is corrupt. Nothing can be made of 19b as it stands: 'Sheol they sinned'; and, naturally, the emendations suggested are coloured by the view taken of the passage as a whole. As an antecedent is required for the pronouns in 20, we are safe in reading 'the sinner' for 'they sinned' (Ball, Dhorme). To read 'his sin' (with Greek and Vulg.) is no improvement, as 'his' has no antecedent. The word 'Sheol' cannot be correct, because the context deals, not with the death of the sinner, but with the loss of his property (18-19a), and of his family (19b-20). His death is described in the following strophe. I suggest therefore that for 'Sheol' we should read the verb *sha'al* 'examine' (lit. 'question,' cf. Deut. xiii. 15; Is. xlv. 11; Job xl. 7; xlii. 4), and insert the word 'God' (dropped by homoioteleuton). This gives us a clause similar to verse 17: 'If God were to question the sinner,' and the following clauses from the apodosis.

20a. Hebrew: 'The womb shall forget him, the worm *sucked* him, he shall be remembered no more.' The verb 'sucked' is Aramaic, and the meaning is inappropriate (and the tense); for, as explained above, the sinner's death is described in the following strophe. If we read 'his greatness' instead of 'worm' (a change of pointing), and connect it with the following, we obtain a good parallel to 20c. The first clause 'the womb shall forget him' is quite in accord with the context: he will have no posterity. There remains the word 'sucked,' which is almost certainly a corruption. A plausible conjecture is that of Beer, Budde and others: 'the *square of his place* will forget him.' Dhorme reads: 'The womb that *formed him* shall forget him.'

Apart from the fact that the verb (formed) is not Hebrew, the sense obtained is unsuitable; for 'the womb that formed him' is his mother's womb. The change which I suggest is much simpler, viz. to read 'and he shall be plucked out' for 'sucked' (change of one letter). Cf. 'like a tree' in 20c, and the use of the verb in a similar sense in xviii. 14; xvii. 11, and the synonym in xix. 10: 'He hath plucked up my hope as a tree.'

20b-c. His possessions and his family (which constituted his greatness) having vanished, his 'greatness' will be forgotten, and his power of doing mischief will be completely taken away. Cf. viii. 18; xv. 29; xviii. 17-19; xx. 6-10.

21-25. The tyrant who oppresses the widow enjoys long life and success; even when calamity comes, he escapes. If God saw the actions of such men, their fate would be different; they would be cut off suddenly and prematurely.

21. The subject is the 'tyrant' of verse 22, who corresponds to the criminals of 17ff and the 'sinner' of 19b-20. He oppressed the widow, yet he is immune. *He maltreated*. This is the reading of the Greek and Targum, and is supported by the parallelism. The Hebrew has 'he ruleth,' which some critics retain by giving it the meaning 'devoureth.'

22a-b. The text is somewhat disturbed. Hebrew: 'He draweth away the mighty by His power.' If God is the subject (though not named), there is an awkward change of subject, for the subject of the other verses is the 'tyrant.' Buhl has probably found the right solution by dividing the consonants differently, and reading 'his days' instead of the plural termination. The parallel clause is obtained by joining the first word of 22b to 22c. Cf. xxi. 13.

22c-23a. Even in time of general calamity the tyrant escapes. *He believeth not in his life*. Cf. Deut. xxviii. 66. Even when there seemed no reasonable hope, he is spared. Job has already denied that the wicked is carried off in the day of calamity (xxi. 30).

23b-24a. The fate of the tyrant would be different if God took cognisance of his misdeeds. We must interpret 23b as a conditional clause like 17 and 19b: 'If His eyes were upon their ways.' The use of the plural is intelligible, because the 'tyrant' represents the criminals of 17ff. In 24, the Greek has the singular throughout, the Hebrew the plural except in one instance (*he* is no more). If the reference is to the tyrant of verse 17 alone, the singular is correct, if, as is more likely, he includes the criminals of 17, the plural is the original. There is a transition from the singular to the plural in 23b, and we should probably read the plural in the following verses. With this verse compare xx. 5ff.

24b-c. *Like the mallow*. The Hebrew has 'like all'; but the parallel clause is in favour of the name of a plant, and the Greek (like the mallow) is probably correct. For the metaphors to describe the premature death of the wicked compare viii. 11-13, xv. 30-33.

25. If they do not agree with him, let them prove him wrong!

## NOTE ON CHAPTERS xxv.-xxxi.

It is generally agreed among modern critics—Budde, Regnier (R.B. 1924, pp. 186ff) Peters and Riciotti are exceptions—that the order of this section of the book is not that of the original writer. The vital facts of the case are these:—

1. In this section of the Dialogue, Bildad's speech consists of only five verses, while no speech is assigned to Sophar. On the other hand, Job's speech in reply to Bildad is exceptionally long, including the whole of xxvi.-xxxi.
2. Certain parts of this long speech, notably xxvii. 13-23, uphold the doctrines which in the first part of the Dialogue were defended by the three friends, and strenuously denied by Job.
3. Chapters xxvii. and xxix. have a new title prefixed, which is strange, seeing that neither is, in the present arrangement, the beginning of a new speech.

On these grounds, scholars have come to the obvious conclusion that the present arrangement of the text is due to textual corruption, and that the original speeches of both Bildad and Sophar have been incorporated into the long monologue of Job. But they are not agreed, either as to the exact extent of the passages which are to be assigned to the three friends, nor as to the particular sections' to be allotted to each.

With regard to the first point, there are three sections which come into question, viz. a) xxiv. 18-24; b) xxv.-xxvi.; and c) xxvii. 7-23.

a) Marshall regards this section as part of Bildad's speech. Hoffmann and Ley limit Bildad's speech to 18-20. Dhorme assigns the whole section to Sophar. We have already seen that these views of this passage are based on a misinterpretation of the text, and that there is no valid reason for not regarding it as part of Job's speech.

b) There is a general tendency to regard both these chapters as constituting Bildad's speech. But here again, there are differences in detail. According to Siegfried and Dhorme the original arrangement was xxv.; xxvi. 5-14; according to Duhm, xxvi. 2-4; xxv. 2-6; xxvi. 5-14; according to Peake, xxv. 2-3; xxvi. 5-14 (*cf.* Gray, p. xl.; Regnier in R.B. 1924, p. 186ff). Marshall is the only scholar who assigns xxv., xxvi. 5-14 to Sophar. The majority regard xxvi. 1-4 as the words of Job.

c) Here again, although there is substantial agreement among scholars, that this passage contains Sophar's last speech, there are some differences in detail, chiefly regarding verses 11-13. These three verses are assigned to Job by Bickell, Duhm, Peake, and Gray; Dhorme assigns 7-12 to Job, the rest to Sophar.

But even in this rearrangement of the text some difficulties remain. Job's speech in reply to Bildad is exceptionally short, 14 verses according to Dhorme (xxvi. 2-4; xxvii. 2-12), only 7 verses (xxiv. 2-6, 11, 12) according to Gray; Job's reply to Sophar is exceptionally long (xxix.-xxxi.).

It is to be noted that there is nothing in the subject-matter to differentiate the speeches of Bildad and Sophar. The sole reason for assigning xxv.-xxvi. to Bildad, and xxvii. 7-23 to Sophar is that the former section comes first in the present text. If there were any convincing argument for assigning xxv.-xxvi. to Sophar and vice versa, it would make no difference to the interpretation of the text as a whole. This is precisely where the strophic system employed by the writer of Job gives us valuable assistance.

In the rest of the Dialogue, Bildad's speeches are arranged in strophes of three verses (3 : 3 : 3), while those of Sophar are in strophes of five verses (5 : 5 : 5). Applying this criterion to the two sections under discussion we find the unexpected result that the passage usually assigned to Bildad should be assigned to Sophar and vice versa. Again, Job's replies to Bildad are in strophes of six verses, while his replies to Sophar are in strophes of alternatively five and six (5 : 6 : 5). Applying this test to Job's long monologue (xxvii.-xxxi.), we find that Job's reply to Bildad consisted of xxix.-xxx. and that his reply to Sophar consisted of xxvii. 1-6; xxxi. If we now arrange the speeches in this order, it is easy to trace the origin of the present arrangement. One section of a MS. containing Sophar's speech and the beginning of Job's reply (6 verses) got misplaced, and was afterwards inserted in Bildad's speech, a part at the beginning and the rest after the first strophe.

The relation between the present text and the suggested arrangement may perhaps be seen more clearly if both are set down side by side :

Present text	Suggested (original) text
<i>Sophar (?) - xxv.</i>	
Bildad - xxvi. 1-4	Bildad - xxvi. 1-4
<i>Sophar (?) - xxvi. 5-14</i>	
<i>Job (?) - xxvii. 1-6</i>	
Bildad (?) - xxvii. 7-23	„ + xxvii. 7-23
Job - xxix.-xxx.	Job - xxix.-xxx.
	[Sophar - xxv. + xxvi. 5-14]
Job - xxxi.	Job - [xxvii. 1-6] + xxxi.

The portions in italics—Sophar's speech and a part of Job's reply—are now placed before and after the first strophe of Bildad's speech; they stood originally before xxxi.

This hypothesis, suggested by the metrical structure, is confirmed by the following considerations :



a) There is a remarkable sequence of thought between the fragments now brought into juxtaposition, viz. xxv. and xxvi. 5-14; xxvi. 1-4 and xxvii. 7-23; xxvii. 1-6 and xxxi. This is clearly seen in the synopsis of the argument of each speech.

b) All the anomalies of the text are now traced to a single cause, the accidental displacement of the portion of the text containing Sophar's speech and the beginning of Job's reply. In all the current theories, it is assumed that at least two displacements took place.

c) The new arrangement is in accordance with the general plan of the speeches in the first and second Cycles. In each of the latter, it is only in the final speech that Job replies directly to the arguments of the three friends. The same holds good here. Job's defence in xxvii. 1-6 and xxxi. is his reply both to the charges made by Eliphaz in xxii. 6-7 and to Sophar's speech on God's omniscience (xxv., xxvi. 5-14); and in xxxi. 1-3 he refers to his former views on retribution, which formed the subject of Bildad's speech (xxvi. 1-4, xxvii. 7-23).

d) The peculiar titles in xxvii. 1 and xxix. 1 receive a natural explanation. They are the relics of the primitive arrangement. When the text became disarranged, the original title 'And Job answered and said' was no longer suitable, and the present form 'And Job again took up his parable and said' was substituted.

## BILDAD'S THIRD SPEECH, xxvi. 1-4 + xxvii. 7-23.

For the reconstruction of the Speech see introductory note on Chapters xxv.-xxxi. p. 163.

*Argument.* The Speech is a description of the fate of the wicked, similar to the three friends' speeches in the Second Cycle (xv., xviii., xx.). But here Bildad is not giving his own views, but quoting Job's words spoken to those who, in former days, were perplexed by the prosperity of the wicked. Job's earlier views coincided with those of his friends, which he now so vehemently rejects.

Let him recall how he used to admonish the weaker brethren in the past. Did he not invoke the teaching of the wise and the revelation of God? (xxvi. 1-4). He showed them the folly of their doubts, by explaining God's dealings with men, viz., as their own experience should have taught them, that the wicked is doomed to misfortune (xxvii. 11-12, 7). Premature death, misfortune and unhappiness are his lot (8-10). His children will perish by the sword, famine and pestilence (11-13). His prosperity is insecure (16-18), and in a single night he will be reduced from affluence to penury (19-21) and exposed to the buffeting and insults of his fellows (22-23).

*Strophic arrangement* : 3 : 3 : 3.

xxvi. 1 And Bildad the Shuhite answered and said :

- 2 How hast thou helped the weak ?  
Succoured the arm of the feeble ?
- 3 How hast thou counselled the ignorant ?  
And encouraged the faint-hearted ?
- 4 With whom hast thou held converse ?  
And whose spirit came forth from thee ?

xxvii. 11 " I will teach you concerning the hand of God,  
And that which is with the Almighty I will  
not hide ;

- 12 Behold, ye all have seen it,  
Why then will ye be utterly vain ?
- 7 Let my enemy be as the wicked,  
And my adversary like the impious !

- 8 For what is the hope of the wicked, when he  
cometh to an end ?  
When God taketh away his soul ?

- 9 Will God hear his cry,  
When distress cometh upon him ?  
10 Or doth he delight in the Almighty ?  
Invoke God at all times ?
- 13 This is the portion of the wicked man from God,  
And the tyrants' lot, which they receive from the  
Almighty
- 14 If his children be numerous, it is for the sword,  
And his offspring shall not be sated with bread ;  
15 Those that survive of his shall be buried by Death,  
And their widows shall make no lamentation.
- 16 Though he have amassed silver like dust,  
And prepared raiment like clay,  
17 He may prepare, but the just shall put it on,  
And the innocent shall share the silver ;  
18 He hath built his house like a moth,  
And like a booth which a watchman maketh.
- 19 Rich he lieth down, and it is not taken away,  
He openeth his eyes, and it is no more ;  
20 Terrors shall overtake him like waters,  
In the night a tempest shall snatch him away ;  
21 The east wind shall lift him up, and he must go,  
It shall sweep him out of his place.
- . . . . .  
. . . . .
- 22 He shall hurl at him, and spare not,  
He would fain flee away from his hand ;  
23 He shall clap hands at him,  
And hiss him out of his place.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xxvi. 1. 1. בְּלִדְרֵי הַשָּׁחִי. MT איוב. 3b. 1. לָרֶךְ. MT  
לָרֶב. xxvii. 8a. 1. יֵשֶׁל (שִׁלֵּל). MT יֵשֶׁל. 11-12. Transp.  
ante 7. 15b. 1. אֶלְמֶנְתָּם (G. Syr.). MT אֶלְמֶנְתָּיו. 23a. 1.  
בְּפִימוֹ. MT בְּפִימוֹ.

## COMMENTARY.

xxvi. 1-4. Recall how, in the days of your prosperity, you used to comfort others, and dispel their doubts. You, too, professed to be guided by the teaching of the wise, and by divine revelation !

1. The present text attributes this passage to Job ; but it is probable that, originally, it formed the introduction to Bildad's speech. We should therefore read ' Bildad ' instead of ' Job ' in the introductory clause.

2. Those who regard this passage as part of Job's speech are obliged to hold that he is speaking ironically. Thus Peters takes the words as an ironical reference to Bildad's defence of God's might and wisdom (xxv.). God is the ' weak ' and ' ignorant ' one whom Bildad undertakes to help and enlighten ! Dhorne takes ' weak ' and ' ignorant ' to refer to Job himself : your words are not of much assistance to me in my trouble ! But, except in one instance (xvi. 2ff), where there is special reason for addressing one of the three, Job always addresses the friends in the plural, and the use of the singular here points to one of the three friends as the speaker. If Bildad (or Sophar) is the speaker, the words can be taken in their natural sense. In xvi. 2ff, Job tells them how he would have spoken if their positions were reversed. Bildad reminds him that, in the past, he spoke precisely as they are speaking now. The passage is practically a repetition of the words of Eliphaz in iv. 3-4 : ' Thou hast corrected many, and hands grown feeble thou didst strengthen ; thy words have raised up the fallen, and drooping knees thou didst make firm.' The ' weak ' and the ' ignorant ' are those who were perplexed by the apparent absence of retribution, when they saw the wicked prosper.

3. *Encouraged*, lit. ' made to know prudence or wisdom ' (cf. vi. 13). *Faint-hearted*. The Hebrew has ' in large measure ' ; but the parallelism suggests the slight change (Reiske). The faint-hearted are those who, like the Psalmist (lxxiii. 13-14), were tempted to abandon the law owing to the absence of retribution. Cf. xxiii. 16.

4. *With whom ?* The answer is ' with the wise.' Job, like themselves, professed to give the teaching of tradition (cf. viii. 8ff ; xv. 18-19). *Whose spirit ?* God's. He, too, used to appeal to revelation (cf. xv. 10-11 ; xx. 3). The following strophes purport to give a summary of Job's former views on the fate of the wicked.

11-12, 7. Job's rebuke to the perplexed. He taught them that their doubts were sheer folly ; for, as their own experience should have shown them the doom of the wicked is certain.

11. This verse and the following create considerable difficulty for those who regard 7-23 as part of Sophar's or Bildad's speech. The plural ( ' you ' ) rather points to Job as the speaker. Hence

many make an exception of these two verses (Peake, Gray). Others explain the plurals as due to corruption after the passage had been made part of Job's speech. If Bildad is quoting Job's words, the difficulty disappears; those addressed are the 'weak' of xxvi. 1-4. But it is probable that the verses are not in their original position. For they interrupt the sequence between 8-10 and 13-15; and as the 'teaching' has already begun in verse 7, these two verses should probably precede the latter verse. *Concerning the hand of God*, i.e. His actions regarding the wicked. For the use of the preposition in this sense cf. Ps. xxv. 8, Prov. iv. 11. The Greek reading 'what is in the hand of God' is probably an assimilation to 11b. *With the Almighty*, i.e. in His mind, His purpose. Cf. x. 13; xxiii. 14.

12. Job reminded the doubters of their own experience, viz. that the wicked always meet with misfortune. Cf. iv. 7-8; Ps. xxxvii. 25.

7. The verse is a brief summary of what follows—the fate of the wicked is such that he could not wish his worst enemy greater misery.

8-10. For the lot of the wicked is sudden death (8), misfortune (9), and unhappiness (10).

8. *What is the hope?* Death puts an end to his prosperity (cf. xiv. 19; xvii. 15). The thought is the same as that in Psalm xlix. 17: 'For when he dieth, he shall take nothing away; his glory shall descend with him.' *Cometh to an end*. The verb is usually transitive; but it is used intransitively in Joel ii. 8. Some point the verb as a passive: 'When he is cut off.' The translation 'though he get him gain' (Vulg. Rev. Vers.) is not suitable here. *Taketh away*. The verb is found only here; but it is used in Syriac in the sense of 'draw away.' A change of pointing gives us the verb 'despoileth' i.e. taketh away suddenly, and this is to be preferred. The emendation 'when he lifteth up his soul to God' (Peters, Dhorme) anticipates verse 9, and requires a further change in 8a: 'when he prayeth.'

9. But even before his death, he will meet with misfortune, and there will be no hope of escape, for God will not hear his prayer for help. Cf. xv. 21; xviii. 12.

10. Or does disaster never come? Is his good fortune without interruption? As Eliphaz points out (xv. 20), he is not happy in reality; he is always expecting disaster. *Doth he delight*. In xxii. 26, Eliphaz uses similar terms to describe Job's relations with God after his repentance: 'Thou wilt delight in the Almighty.' By his prosperity, the wicked man seems to enjoy God's favour and friendship; but he knows that at any moment disaster may come.

11-12. See above before verse 7.

13-15. A man's prosperity is indicated by the number of his family and the extent of his possessions. The wicked man

may have many children, but they are destined to be destroyed by the sword, famine and pestilence.

13. This verse is practically a repetition of the final verse of Sophar's second speech (xx. 29, *cf.* xviii. 21).

14. The sword and famine will blot out his family.

15. *They that survive*, i.e. they that escape the sword and famine. *By Death*. Here, as in Jer. xv. 2, xviii. 21, xliii. 11, Death refers to pestilence (*cf.* Apoc. vi. 18; xviii. 8). Their widows will make no lamentation, because they will receive no ritual burial (*cf.* Jer. xxii. 18-19; Ps. lxxviii. 64). For the sword, famine and pestilence as the agents of God's wrath, *cf.* v. 20-22; xviii. 11-13.

16-18. His prosperity is insecure. Others will soon enjoy his wealth; for his prosperity is as short-lived as a moth, as insecure as a watchman's hut.

16. *Like dust . . . like clay*, i.e. in abundance. *Cf.* 'And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem like stones' (1 K. x. 21)

17. *Cf.* 'The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just' (Prov. xiii. 22; *cf.* Eccles. ii. 26; Ps. xxxvii. 9, 11).

18. *His house*. Here, as in viii. 15 (*cf.* 1 K. xiii. 8), 'house' means all his possessions, his wealth. *Like a moth*. As in iv. 19, the moth is the symbol of brief existence. There is no justification in the Greek for the reading 'a spider's web' (*cf.* Peters). Ehrlich, in order to get a closer parallel to 'booth,' suggests that the word means 'nest' (as in Arabic). The translation 'like a moth's (house)' is also possible. The particle is used in this manner in Psalm xviii. 34: 'Who hath made my feet like hinds (feet)' (*cf.* Is. lxiii. 2; Jer. 1, 9; Lam. v. 21).

19-21. In a single night his prosperity will vanish (19), and will be followed by distress (20), and he will be driven from his estates (21).

19. *And it is not taken away . . . and it is no more*. The subject is 'house' of verse 18, viz. his wealth. Some critics make 'the wicked man' subject throughout; but this makes 19b say 'he openeth his eyes, and he is no more.' To avoid this, they are obliged to make a change in 19a 'He shall do so no more' (*cf.* Greek), and supply the word 'rich' in 19b: 'and he is [rich] no longer!' The meaning of the verse is: suddenly, in a single night, he is reduced from affluence to penury.

20. Instead of prosperity, he will now have troubles and adversity. Disasters shall come upon him like a flood. *Cf.* 'A flood shall sweep away his house, a downpour in his day of wrath' (xx. 28). The figure of a flood for troubles is frequent in the Psalms. *Cf.* Ps. xviii. 4; xxiii. 6; lxvi. 12; lxiv. 2-3). *A tempest*, *cf.* xv. 30.

21. Compare Job's description of his own case in xxx. 22: 'Thou liftest me up, upon the wind Thou makest me ride, Thou tосsest me about with a storm.' *And he must go*. The

reference is not to his death, but to his expulsion from his house and his possessions. Cf. xviii. 14 ; ' He shall be torn from his tent.' The Vulg. *auferet* deserves consideration, for it avoids the change of subject.

22-23. He will be reduced from affluence to penury, exposed to the buffeting and mockery of his fellows.

22. The subject is not expressed. Peters make God the subject ; but this is not likely, as God has not been mentioned since verse 13, and the terms are more applicable to men. Dhorme makes the subject indefinite. But the strophic arrangement suggests that a verse has been omitted, possibly something like xvii. 8, which describes the rejoicing of the just over the wicked in his downfall.

23. The contempt of his fellow-men is expressed by hand-clapping (cf. Lam. ii. 15), and by whistling or hissing (cf. Jer. xlix. 17 ; Soph. ii. 15).

## THE POEM ON WISDOM, xxviii.

The connection between this Chapter and the Dialogue is very much disputed. a) The majority of modern critics regard it as an independent poem, somewhat like those to be found in the books of Proverbs, Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus. Cf. Prov. 1-19; Wisd. 1. 4-6; vi. 12-ix. 18; Ecclus. 1, 1-10; iv. 11-19; xiv. 20-xv. 10; xxiv. 1-29. b) A few scholars (Budde, Regnier, Peters, Ricciotti) who defend the present arrangement of Chapters xxv.-xxxi., interpret it as the continuation of Job's speech which is begun in xxvii. 1. c) Some others make it a part of the speech of either Bildad or Sophar.

The least probable view is that which makes it part of Job's speech. It is not in the style of Job's other speeches; there is no apparent connection between this Chapter and either xxvii or xxix; if Job had spoken as represented here, the rebuke contained in the Speeches of Jahweh would have been out of place. For Jahweh rebukes Job by reminding him of the mysteries of Divine Providence, which is the theme of this chapter.

The strophic arrangement excludes Bildad as the speaker; but there is much to be said for the view that it formed part of Sophar's speech. The latter, as reconstructed above (xxv. +xxvi. 5-16), deals with the power of God in the heavens, in Sheol and in the earth; the present chapter deals with the wisdom which is the possession of God alone. The association of God's power and wisdom in the same poem is a natural one (cf. the combination of 'wisdom' and 'might' in xii. 13, 16). Sophar in his first Speech (xi. 5ff) argued from the boundless wisdom of God. The Wisdom of God is the principal theme of Jahweh's first Speech, the Power of God of His second.

But, on the other hand, 'wisdom' is used here in a somewhat different sense from that in which Sophar uses it in xi. 5ff. It is not God's knowledge of the faults of men; it is the whole divine plan which was carried into effect at the creation, and is still being executed in the ordinary events which take place from day to day. From this point of view, the chapter is more closely allied to the Speeches of Jahweh and to the final verses of the Speeches of Elihu (xxvii. 22-24). The latter passage may well be the introduction to a new speech of which the main part is now to be found in Chapter xxviii.

It is difficult to reach a definite decision on the matter; but, on the whole, it is more probable that we have here an independent poem. But it does not necessarily follow that it comes from a later hand. It may have been composed by the author himself, or he may have found it in existence already, and incorporated it in his work because of its bearing on the problem of the suffering of the just. But even in this view, the chapter is probably not in its original position. For neither the author himself nor another would be likely to insert this Poem in the midst of the speeches of the Dialogue.



Dhorme's view, that it formed an interlude between the Dialogue proper and Job's long monologue, does not hold, because the 'monologue' is really Job's speeches in reply to Bildad and Sophar, and therefore a part of the Dialogue. Its natural place would be at the end of a section, i.e. either after the Dialogue, or after the Speeches of Elihu. In view of the uncertainty regarding the original position, we have thought it better to leave the chapter where it is, without, however, regarding it as in any way connected with either Chapter xxvii. or Chapter xxix.

*Argument.* True wisdom cannot be acquired by man; it is the possession of God alone.

When there is question of the mining of gold or silver, iron or copper, man is untiring in his labours; he is not deterred by darkness nor distance; he tunnels through rock, and diverts the course of rivers (1-4).

The surface of the earth yields food for man, the interior precious stones. Man overcomes all obstacles in his quest; he searches the depths of the earth and the beds of rivers (5-6, 9-11).

But man cannot reach the abode of Wisdom, not even if, like the vulture of the wild beasts, he could reach the ends of the earth. It is not to be found even in the ocean which surrounds the earth (12-13, 7-8, 14).

By means of the precious metals and the precious stones man can purchase what he desires. But wisdom cannot be obtained by purchase (15-19).

But although it is hidden from all the creatures of heaven and earth and Sheol, it is known to God; for nothing is hidden from Him (20-24).

When He created the universe, and determined the laws which govern its various parts, then He comprehended Wisdom. He appointed man's part in this divine plan: to fear God and avoid evil (25-28).

*Strophic arrangement: 5 : 5 : 5.*

- 1 When there is a mine for silver,  
And a place where gold is refined,
- 2 Iron is taken out of the earth,  
And stone is melted into copper,
- 3 Man putteth an end to darkness,  
And to the uttermost bound he searcheth.  
The stone of darkness and death-shade
- 4 Is pierced with channels by man's agency;  
Those which were forgotten of the foot,  
Diminish, they are diverted by man.

- 5 The earth out of which cometh bread,  
Underneath is turned up by fire ;  
6 The stones thereof are the place of sapphires,  
That have dust of gold ;  
9 Man putteth forth his hand to the flint,  
He overturneth mountains by the roots ;  
10 In the rocks he cleaveth canals,  
Whatever is precious his eye seeth ;  
11 The beds of rivers he searcheth,  
And what was hidden he bringeth to light.
- 12 But Wisdom, where can it be found ?  
And where is the place of understanding ?  
13 Man knoweth not the way thereto,  
And it is not found in the land of the living ;  
[7 The path no bird of prey knoweth,  
And the vulture's eye hath not seen it ;  
8 The proud beasts have not trodden it,  
The lion hath not passed thereby ;]  
14 The Abyss saith : ' It is not in me,'  
And the Sea saith : ' It is not with me.'
- 15 Gold cannot be given in exchange for it,  
Nor silver weighed as the price thereof ;  
16 It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir,  
With the precious onyx or the sapphire ;  
17 Gold and glass cannot equal it,  
Nor can the exchange thereof be vessels of fine gold  
18 Coral and crystal need not be mentioned,  
The excellence of wisdom is above pearls ;  
19 The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it,  
Neither can it be valued with fine gold.
- 20 But Wisdom, whence cometh it ?  
And where is the place of understanding ?  
21 It is hidden from the eyes of all living,  
And from the fowls of the air it is concealed ;

22 Abaddon and Death say :

With our ears we have heard a rumour thereof :

23 God understandeth the way thereof,

And He knoweth the place thereof ;

24 For He looketh to the ends of the earth,

And seeth what is under the whole heavens.

25 When He made a weight for the wind,

And meted out the waters by measure,

26 When He made an ordinance for the rain,

And a way for the thunder-storm ;

27 Then He saw and reckoned it,

He had established it, yea, He had searched it out ;

28 And he said unto man :

. . . . .

Lo, the fear of the Lord is wisdom,

And to depart from evil is understanding.

#### CRITICAL NOTES.

xxviii. 4a. 1. פֶּרִץ נָחַל מַעַם-נָבֵר. MT פֶּרִץ נָחַל מַעַם-נָר.

4c. 1. גָּעוּ. MT גָּעוּ. 7-8. transp. post 13. 11a. 1. מִבְּכִי

(G. Vulg. cf. xxxviii. 16). MT מִבְּכִי. 11b. 1. חִפֵּשׁ (G. Vulg.

Aq. Theod.). MT חִפֵּשׁ. 13a. 1. הִרְבָּה (G.). MT עִרְבָה.

17b. 1. כָּלִי (G. Targ. Vulg. Sym.). MT כָּלִי.

## COMMENTARY.

1-4. In his search for the precious metals, man is deterred neither by darkness nor distance; he cuts new channels through the rock, and diverts the course of impassable streams.

1. The introductory particle ('for' or 'if' or 'when') has been a source of difficulty to commentators. If translated 'for,' it implies that something has preceded, and that the poem is a fragment. Peake suggests that the refrain (12, 20) originally stood at the beginning of the poem. If we translate it 'because' or 'when,' we can regard verses 1-2 as a protasis of which the apodosis begins in verse 3. *Mine*, lit. 'source.' Palestine itself is not rich in minerals, but the Arabian peninsula, and especially Sinai, was a well-known mining centre in ancient times. *Stone is melted*, or 'stone poureth out.' The same verb is used in xxix. 6: 'the rock poured me out rivers of oil.'

3ff It is important to note the parallelism of structure between this strophe and the following. Verses 1-2 are parallel to 5-6; 3a-b to 9; 3c-4a to 10 and 4b-c to 11. 3a-b. *An end to darkness*. This is usually understood to refer to the miner's lamp by which he is able to penetrate to the dark caverns of the earth. But as the next strophe deals with man's search in the bowels of the earth, perhaps the meaning is that man is not stopped by considerations of time or space—he works by night as well as by day, and travels to the end of the earth.

3c-4a. He pierces the solid rock with shafts. *Stone of darkness*. This clause is usually taken with the preceding, as the complement of 'searcheth.' But 'stone of darkness and death shade' is hardly a description of the ore from which he extracts the precious metals. It is rather (cf. 10) the rock in the bowels of the earth through which he tunnels in his quest for the precious metals. The first clause of verse 4 reads in Hebrew: 'He pierced a canal from with a sojourner.' The Versions had before them the same consonantal text, but interpreted differently: 'from (with) lime' (Theod. Aq. Sym.); 'by a sojourning people' (Vulg. Syr.). Many critics follow the Vulgate and Syriac, and think the reference is to the foreign slaves employed in the mine (cf. Giesebrecht, Ehrlich, Graetz, Dhorme). But as the context deals with the labours of *man in general*, the distinction between slaves and natives is out of place. The parallelism with 4c suggests another word for 'man' (cf. iv. 17; x. 5 where the same two words are used in parallel clauses). 'From with *man*' is equivalent to 'by man's agency' (cf. xxxiv. 33). The verb may be taken in an intransitive sense (as Prov. iii. 10), or pointed as a passive. The whole verse 'The stone of darkness and death-shade is pierced with a channel (or channels) by man's agency' is then parallel to verse 10 of the next strophe.

4b-c. Sometimes rivers which interfere with the miner's work have to be diverted from their course. According to the usual interpretation of this verse, the subject is the miners, and the

verbs have reference to the manner in which they work : ' They are forgotten of the foot, they hang far from men, they swing to and fro.' But a) in the rest of the poem the singular is used in speaking of man ; b) the meaning attached to at least the first two verbs is extremely doubtful ; c) this interpretation assumes that the miners worked in vertical shafts, whereas the mines of the ancients were horizontal shafts in the side of a cliff or mountain.

*Forgotten of the foot.* This is quite appropriate when applied to a valley untrodden by man because of its remoteness, or the depth of water which flowed in it ; its more natural antecedent is not ' men ' but ' channels ' of 4a. The verb in the second clause is used in Is. xix. 6 of streams which *diminish* in volume. We have but to make a slight change in the pointing of the last verb to obtain the text translated above. *Diverted.* The verb is used in this sense in Lam. iii. 9, and Jer. iii. 21 (of paths). This gives a very natural picture ; the miner makes new channels through the rock, and diverts the course of streams, so that the valley never trodden by human foot may be searched for metals. Cf. 11.

5-11. The earth produces food for man ; but beneath its surface are precious stones. In pursuit of these, man digs through the hardest rocks, and uproots mountains ; he cleaves new water-channels in the rocks and dams up the old.

5. The surface of the earth yields food for man (Ps. civ. 14). *By fire.* The text has ' as by fire ' ; but we should probably change the initial letter (with Vulg.).

6. *Sapphire.* The reference is not to our ' sapphire ' which was probably not known to the ancients, but to *lapis lazuli* which contains particles of iron pyrites easily mistaken for gold. Cf. *Inest ei et aureus pulvis*—Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxvii. 38. Some critics make a slight change and read : ' Its (i.e. the earth's) dust hath gold.' But the quest for gold has been described in the first strophe.

7-8. These two verses are probably misplaced. The ' path ' which is unknown to the birds and beasts is surely not that traversed by the miner, but, as verse 21 shows, that which leads to the abode of Wisdom. Peake is probably right in placing them after verse 12 or 13.

7. The birds mentioned are noted for their keenness of vision ; they can see their prey afar off (xxxix. 29). They are also capable of reaching distant countries beyond the reach of man. Yet even these have not seen the path of Wisdom.

8. The wild beasts dwell in regions remote from man. For the term ' proud beasts,' cf. xli. 26.

9. No obstacle is too great to be surmounted. Neither the hardness of the rock (' flint ') nor its great size (' mountains '). Cf. verse 3a-b.

10. Cf. 3b-4a. *Canals*. The Hebrew word is that which is used for the 'Nile'; hence Dhorme translates 'little Niles.' But the term is used in a general sense in Is. xxxiii. 21 = 'streams.' As he makes the new channel, he watches for precious stones.

11. Cf. 4b-c. He searches the beds of streams, probably, by diverting the water to a new channel. *The beds of rivers he searcheth*. This is the reading of the Greek and Vulg. and is accepted by the majority of critics. The Hebrew has 'From weeping he bindeth up rivers.' The meaning is substantially the same; but the use of the verb 'bind' in the sense of 'dam (a stream)' is unlikely, and the position of 'from weeping' is unnatural. *Beds*. The word is used in this sense in xxxviii. 16 (the bed of the ocean) and probably in Prov. viii. 24.

12-14 (+7-8). Wisdom eludes man's search. Not even the vultures nor the wild beasts have seen its path. It is not even in the ocean which surrounds the earth.

12. This verse is repeated with a slight variation in 20. The whole description of man's search for treasures leads up to this: he can find treasures in the bowels of the earth; but Wisdom he cannot find.

13. *The way thereof*. The Hebrew has 'price thereof,' which anticipates 15ff. The Greek reading ('way') is accepted by the majority of critics (cf. 7, 23). *The land of the living*, i.e. the earth inhabited by man, as opposed to the distant lands known only to the birds and the wild beasts (7-8), and the ocean which surrounds the earth.

14. The *Abyss* or the *Sea* here represents the most remote part of the universe. Cf. Ps. cxxxix. 9. Note the gradation—the earth inhabited by man, regions remote from human habitation, and the ocean which surrounds the earth.

15-19. Wisdom cannot be acquired by purchase. No precious gem can equal it. Cf. Prov. iii. 14f; viii. 10f; Ps. xix. 11; cxix. 72; Wisd. vii. 9.

15. The fruits of man's search, no matter how valuable they be, cannot purchase Wisdom. The list which follows contains no less than five distinct names for 'gold.' The term used here is frequent in Assyrian, and probably means gold in bars, refined gold (cf. *aurum obrizum*).

16. *Gold of Ophir* was the most highly prized (cf. xxii. 24; Is. xiii. 12; Ps. xlv. 10). *Onyx*. This gem has not been identified with certainty. It is mentioned in Gen. ii. 11 as found in Hevilah, and again in Exod. xxv. 7; xxviii. 9, 20.

17. *Glass*, probably in the form of vessels. Cf. 'vessels of gold' in 17b.

18. *The excellence*. The precise meaning of the word is not certain. The root means 'to draw,' hence 'to draw to oneself,' 'to acquire,' and so the noun is usually translated 'acquisition.' But the verb is also intransitive—'to march,' so that the meaning 'advance,' 'excellence' for the noun is equally probable. *Above*

pearls, cf. Prov. iii. 15 ; viii. 11 ; xx. 15 ; xxxi. 10 ; Eccclus. vii. 19 ; xxx. 15.

20-24. Though Wisdom is inaccessible to the creatures of heaven and earth and Sheol, it is known to God, Who is omniscient.

20. Cf. 12.

21. From the heavens above to Sheol beneath there is none who possesses Wisdom. In the third strophe (12-14) he explained that Wisdom was not to be found throughout the length and breadth of the earth ; here he states that it is unknown to the creatures of heaven, earth and Sheol. The same method of describing the universe is found in xxvi. 5-14 and in xxxviii. 16-18 (cf. xi. 7-9). *All living* represent the inhabitants of the earth (animals and men) ; *the fowls of the air* represent the heavens.

22. *Abaddon* (cf. xxvi. 6) and *Death* are synonyms of Sheol. The dead have merely heard of Wisdom ; they do not possess it.

23. Wisdom is the possession of God alone. Cf. Prov. viii. 30f ; Eccclus. i. 1. The 'way' refers back to verses 7, 13, and the 'place' to 12b, 20b.

24. Nothing is hidden from the eyes of God, therefore He knows the abode of Wisdom. *Under the whole heaven*, i.e. the whole created universe (xli. 3).

25-28. He possessed Wisdom from the first moment of creation ; for He Himself is its creator.

25. The wind, waters, rain and thunder are four of God's works whose character and operation have been determined by Him. The *wind* is impalpable, yet God at the creation determined its weight. Cf. 'Who hath gathered the wind in His fists ?' (Prov. xxx. 4). The *waters* are apparently boundless, yet He determined their measure. Cf. Is. xl. 12 : 'Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand ?' Cf. xxxviii. 8-10.

26. At the creation He determined the laws which govern the forces of nature like rain and thunder. *Ordinance*, i.e. laws which regulate the fall of the rains of autumn (early rain), winter, and spring (latter rain). Cf. v. 10 ; xxxvii. 16 ; xxxviii. 25-26. *Thunder-storm*. It is doubtful whether the expression here and in xxxviii. 25, means 'thunder-bolts' or 'thunder-storms' ; the latter is more probable. Both the thunder-storm and the lightning are the agents of God's wrath, as the rain is of His bounty.

27. *Then*, i.e. at the creation, Wisdom already existed, and God 'reckoned' or fully comprehended it. The verbs in the second part of the verse should probably be translated by the pluperfect, for they describe the origin of Wisdom. This is clear from Eccclus. i. 9, where the same thoughts are expressed, but in logical order : 'The Lord Himself *created* it, and *saw* it, and *reckoned* it.' Cf. Prov. viii. 22-31.

28. The Wisdom which has been the subject of the poem up to this point is the divine plan which governs the whole universe. This was formed by God before the creation, entered into all His works, and governs them to the end of time. This Wisdom is known to God alone. But there is a wisdom which is given to man, namely, practical wisdom, a guide to man's conduct, which has been revealed to him by his Creator. It is summed up in the maxim : ' Fear God and avoid evil ' (*cf.* Prov. iii. 7 ; xiv. 16 ; xvi. 6).

The text is somewhat defective. For 28a introduces a direct statement of God, yet 28b-c cannot be the statement, for it speaks of God in the third person, and is a comment by the writer himself. Either a line has dropped out, or verse 28 has taken the place of the original ending. Many critics (Peake, Gray, Dhorme, Duhm, etc.) regard the verse as a later addition.



JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD, ~~xxix~~-xxx.

*Argument.* Job contrasts his former happy state with his present misery. The change has been due, not to his sins, but to the action of God.

a) *His former happiness.* Job enjoyed the friendship and protection of God; he was prosperous and happy (2-7); the highest classes of the people paid homage to him, and the poor acclaimed him as their protector (8-13). He was the embodiment of all the virtues, and naturally looked forward to the due reward of a virtuous life—a happy old age (14-20).

b) *His present misery.* Instead of enjoying the respect of the wise and the noble, he has to endure the contempt of the youthful and ignorant (21-xxx. 1); men who are infinitely inferior to him in social position, the outcasts of society, who are compelled to live like wild beasts in remote and desolate places (2-8), now treat him as their inferior; they slander him because of his affliction, and attack him with impunity (9-14).

c) *The cause of the change.* He has been smitten by a double calamity: the loss of his property, and bodily infirmity (i. 4b-19). God is not only deaf to his appeal for redress, but adds to his torments, and is about to bring him to a premature death, a poor recompense for his kindness to the poor and afflicted (20-25). Instead of the happiness which he expected as his due, incessant pain and sorrow are his lot (26-31).

*Strophic arrangement:* 6 : 6 : 6.

xxix. 1 And Job answered and said :

- 2 Oh that I were again as in the months of old,  
In the days when God watched over me !
- 3 When His lamp did shine above my head,  
By His light I walked through the darkness ;
- 4 As I was in the days of my affluence,  
When God put a hedge about my tent ;
- 5 When the Almighty was still with me,  
And my young men round about me ;
- 6 When my steps were washed with butter,  
And the rock poured me out rivers of oil ;
- 7 When I went out to the gate of the city,  
When I set up my seat in the market-place
- 8 The young men saw me, and hid themselves,  
And the old men rose up and stood ;

- 9 Princes refrained from speaking,  
And laid their hand on their mouth ;  
10 The voice of the chiefs was hushed,  
And their tongue clave to their palate ;  
11 When the ear heard me, it blessed me,  
And when the eye saw me, it gave testimony of me ;  
12 For I delivered the poor who cried out for aid,  
And the orphan who had no helper ;  
13 The blessing of the destitute came upon me,  
And I made the heart of the widow joyful.
- 14 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me,  
My justice was a cloak and a diadem ;  
15 I was eyes to the blind,  
And I was feet to the lame,  
16 And I was a father to the poor ;  
And the cause of one I knew not I examined,  
17 And I broke the jaws of the unjust,  
And from his teeth I plucked the prey ;  
18 And I said : " Like the reed shall I die,  
And like the palm-tree shall I multiply my days ;  
19 My root is spread out to the waters,  
And the dew lodgeth on my branches ;  
20 My glory is fresh in me,  
And my bow is renewed in my hand."
- 21 They listened to me, and waited,  
And they kept silence for my counsel,  
22 And after I had spoken, they spoke not again ;  
And upon them my words dropped,  
23 And they waited for me as for the rain,  
And they opened their mouths, as for the  
latter rain ;  
24 If I laughed at them, they believed not,  
If I were pleased, they did not dissent.  
25 I used to choose their way, and sit as chief,  
And dwelt as a king in the army,  
As one that comforteth mourners ;

- xxx. 1 But now, they laugh at me,  
Men who are younger in years than I,  
Whose fathers I would not have deigned  
To put with the dogs of my flock !
- 2 As for the might of their hands—what was it to me ?  
In them was all vigour perished,  
3 Exhausted with want and famine !  
Who gnawed the food ( ) of waste and desolation,  
4 Who plucked the mallow and the leaves of shrubs,  
Whose food was the root of the broom ;  
5 From the society [of men] were they driven out,  
Men cried against them as against a thief ;  
6 In a cliff of the valleys they had to dwell,  
In holes in the ground and rocks ;  
7 Among the bushes they whimpered,  
And under the nettles they huddled together ;  
8 An ignoble, nameless brood,  
That were cut off out of the land !
- 9 And now I am become their song,  
And I am become a byword to them ;  
10 They abhor me, they stand aloof from me,  
And from my face they have not withholden  
spittle ;  
11 Because He stripped off my excellency and afflicted  
me,  
The bridle from their mouth they have cast away ;  
12 At the right hand the brood rise up,  
They let loose slander [against me] ;  
They have cast up their roads of ruin,  
13 They have pulled down my paths, for my undoing ;  
They prevail, there is none to restrain them,  
14 As through a wide breach they advance.
- Under a storm I was rolled about,  
15 Terrors were turned upon me ;  
And mine honour was chased as by the wind,  
And like a cloud my welfare passed away ;

- 16 And now my soul poureth itself out within me,  
Days of affliction take hold of me ;
- 17 By night my bones are pierced,  
And the pains that gnaw me take no rest ;
- 18 With His great might He seized my garment,  
Like the collar of my tunic He girded me ;
- 19 He hurled me into the mire,  
And I am become like dust and ashes.
- 20 I cry to Thee, and Thou answerest not,  
I stand, and Thou regardest not ;
- 21 Thou art changed to a cruel one towards me,  
With the might of Thy hand Thou assailest me ;
- 22 Thou liftest me up, on the wind Thou makest me  
ride,  
Thou tосsest me about with a storm ;
- 23 Yea, I know that Thou wilt bring me to death,  
The house of meeting of all the living ;
- 24 Surely, against the needy one putteth not forth the  
hand,  
If in his calamity he cry out for redress ;
- 25 Verily, I did weep for one whose day was sad,  
My soul did grieve for the poor !
- 26 Though I looked for good, yet evil came,  
And I hoped for light, but there came darkness ;
- 27 My bowels boil, and rest not,  
Days of affliction have come upon me ;
- 28 I walk about sorrowful, and not in affluence,  
I rise up in the assembly, I cry out ;
- 29 My skin is black upon me,  
And my bones are burnt with fever-heat ;
- 30 I am brother to the jackals,  
And companion to the ostriches ;
- 31 And my harp is tuned to mourning,  
And my pipe to the voice of weepers.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xxix. i. 1. וַיֹּסֶף אִיּוֹב שְׁמֹאת מְשָׁלוֹ MT. וַיַּעַן אִיּוֹב וַיֹּאמֶר. 4b. 1. בְּסוֹךְ (G. Sym. Syr.). MT בְּסוֹר. 12b. 1. לֹא (G. Syr. Vulg.). MT וְלֹא. 18a. 1. עִם־קִנְיָה MT. עִם־קִנְיָה. 18b. 1. כְּנָחַל (G. cf. Num. xxiv. 6; Ecclus. i. 12). MT כְּחֹל. 23b. 1. כְּמִלְקוֹשׁ. 23b. 1. מְלָקוֹשׁ (Syr.). MT לְמִלְקוֹשׁ. xxx. 3b. 1. צִיר. MT צִיה. 1. אָנוּשׁ. MT אָמֵשׁ. Cf. 5a. 4a. 1. וְעָלִי (Syr.). MT עָלִי. 5a. insert אָנוּשׁ. Cf. 3b. 11a. 1. יִתְרִי (Qeri). 11b. 1. מִפִּימוֹ. MT מִפִּנִּי. 12a. 1. פָּרַחֵם (Targ.)? MT פָּרַחַח. 12b. 1. רָגַל. 12b. 1. רָגְלִי. 13b. 1. הִתְגַּלְגַּל (G.). MT אֶתְגַּלְגַּל. 14b. 1. עֹזַר. MT עֹזֵר. 14b. 1. נִקְרוּ וְעָלִי (G.). MT תִּרְדֹּף. 17a. 1. נִקְרוּ וְעָלִי (G.). MT יִתְחַפֵּשׁ. 18a. 1. יִתְחַפֵּשׁ (G.). MT גִּקְר מְעָלִי. 20b. insert לֹא (Vulg.). 22b. 1. בְּשׂוֹאָה (= שְׂאָה, 14b. cf. Ez. xxxviii. 9, Prov. i. 27, where it is parallel to סוּפָה as here). MT תִּשְׁוֶה. 24a. 1. בְּעֵי. MT בְּעֵי. 1. אֶשְׁלַח (G.). MT יִשְׁלַח. 24b. 1. לְדִין שׁוֹעַ. MT לְהֵן שׁוֹעַ. 28a. 1. חֲמָה (= חֲמָה cf. xxix. 6). MT חֲמָה.

## COMMENTARY.

1-7. Formerly, he enjoyed the favour and protection of God ; he was blessed with children and with prosperity, and honoured by his fellow-men.

1. The introductory formula ' And Job again 'took up his parable and said ' differs from that used hitherto (*cf.* xxvii. 1). The change is the result of the disturbance of the text which has led to the suppression of Sophar's speech.

2. In former days, God was his protector, now He is his foe (*cf.* xxx. 21).

3. *Light* is the symbol of happiness (*cf.* xviii. 6 ; xxi. 17 ; Ps. xviii. 29). Here it also symbolises God's protection and guidance. Now God has put darkness in his path (xix. 8), then he walked in the light of God's protection.

4. *Of my affluence*, lit. ' of my autumn.' The autumn was the time when the fruits of the vintage were gathered, hence the period of affluence. *Made a hedge about*. The Hebrew has ' And the friendship of God was about my tent.' But the reading of the Greek and Syriac (given above) is generally preferred. *Cf.* ' Hast Thou not made a hedge about him and about his house ? ' (i. 10).

5. The fruits of God's friendship were to be seen in his numerous family (5b), and in his prosperity (6). *Young men*, i.e. his children (*cf.* i. 19).

6. Job's land flowed with milk and oil (*cf.* xx. 17 ; Ps. lviii. 11). The *rock* may have reference to the oil-presses in the rock, but, more probably, to the rocky nature of the soil as in Deut. xxxii. 13: ' He made him suck . . . oil out of the flinty rock.'

7. The general meeting-place was in the 'broad-place' beside the city gate (*cf.* Neh. viii. 1-3). There he sat among the elders, as their acknowledged leader.

8-13. His reception in the meeting-place. Young and old, princes and chiefs showed him respect ; the people acclaimed him as the champion of the rights of the helpless.

8ff. The ' young,' ' old,' ' princes ' and ' chiefs ' include all ranks of those assembled. All greet Job with respect, but in varying manner, according to the dignity of each class. The youths efface themselves, the elders stand up, the 'princes cease speaking, and the chiefs speak falteringly.

11. At the very mention of his name, or at the sight of him, they sang his praises, for he was known as the champion of the poor and oppressed.

12. Job's voice in the assembly was always raised on behalf of the poor and oppressed. The poor, the orphan and the widow were the natural victims of the tyrant ; Eliphaz accused Job of cruelty towards them, or neglect of their rights (xxii. 6-9). The testimony of his fellow-citizens is to the contrary.

14-20. In his relations with God and with man, Job was the embodiment of every virtue; he was kind to the helpless and the poor, and helped the weak against the strong. Hence he looked forward to a long and happy life.

14. Cf. 'He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head, and he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as with a mantle' (Is. lix. 17), a passage imitated by St. Paul in Eph. vi. 14 (cf. Is. xi. 5; lxi. 10; Ps. cxxxii. 9). Job is no longer referring to his conduct at the law-courts, but to his general conduct; he had led a virtuous life, and expected the reward of virtue. *Righteousness* has reference to his relations with God, *justice*, to his relations with men; the two terms are equivalent to 'perfect and upright, one that feareth God and avoideth evil' (i. 1).

15-16a. The structure and meaning of the clauses makes it clear that the first half of 16 is to be taken with 15 to form a triplet describing Job's kindness to the poor; the following triplet deals with his defence of the oppressed.

16b-17. If he saw a stranger being wronged, he intervened, and saw that justice was done. *Broke the jaws*, i.e. defeated. The tyrant who takes advantage of his influence in the law courts to wrong the weak is compared to a wild beast ready to devour its prey (cf. xvi. 9f; Ps. iii. 8; xxii. 14).

18. Being a just man, he looked forward to the due reward of his virtuous life, a serene old age. *Like the reed*. The Hebrew has 'with my nest,' i.e. surrounded by my children. But the context demands a reference to long life, and death in the midst of his family does not necessarily imply this. Hence modern critics emend the text and read 'in old age,' or something similar (Siegfried, Cheyne, Torczyner, Dhorme). The next verse, however, presupposes the mention of a tree or plant, which, because it is well-watered, has the prospect of reaching maturity. Now, in viii. 11, the papyrus or sedge deprived of water is used to symbolise the premature death of the wicked; what is more natural than to employ the figure of the papyrus growing beside an unfailing stream as the symbol of the virtuous man living on to a mature old age? A very slight change gives the word 'reed' instead of 'nest.' The particle 'with' is parallel to and synonymous with 'like' as in iii. 14, 15, ix. 26. *Like a palm-tree*. The Hebrew has 'like the sand,' a common figure for vast multitudes (Gen. xxxiii. 13; xli. 49; Is. xlviii. 19). But the context supports the reading of the Greek and Vulgate, 'palm-tree'—a rare word found in Num. xxiv. 6 and Ecclus. i. 14. For the simile of the tree to describe old age compare 'as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people' (Is. lxxv. 22), and, especially, the comparison of the just man to a flourishing palm-tree or cedar in Ps. xcii. 13-15.

19. 'My root spread out to the waters' refers back to the 'reed,' and 'my branches' to the 'palm-tree.' Contrast the figure of the blasted or withered tree to describe the fate of the wicked (viii. 19; xv. 30ff; xviii. 16).

20. Like the leaves and branches of a tree, his bodily vigour would be renewed continually, and his position of honour in the community would be unchanged. *Glory*, i.e. his prosperity, and the honour in which he was held. Cf. 'He has stripped me of my glory' (xix. 9). *The bow* is the symbol of bodily vigour (Gen. xlix. 24; Jer. xlix. 35). But contrary to his expectations, his 'glory' is already taken away, and his body is wasted with disease.

21-xxx. 1. Then his word was accepted as final; it gave confidence and comfort to his hearers: his favour was eagerly sought, and he was the accepted leader and comforter. Now he is an object of contempt to men who lack the dignity of both age and noble birth.

Many modern critics (Peake, Dhorme, Budde, Duhm, etc.) hold that 21-25 should come after verse 10, as they continue the theme begun in verse 8, viz. the respect shown to Job in the assembly. But the present order is perfectly logical: his reception on his arrival (8-13), his character and conduct to which this reception was due (14-20), the effect of his speeches on the elders gathered in council. On the other hand, the contrast between his former status (21ff) and his present ignominy (xxx. 1) is lost by the proposed transposition.

21-22a. The same respect with which he was greeted on his arrival was shown when he rose to speak. They listened with rapt attention, waiting for his opinion; and when he had spoken, considered the matter closed.

22b-23. His opinion received the enthusiastic approval of all. It was as refreshing as the rain after the long drought of summer, or the spring showers which promise a bounteous harvest. *Dropped*. Cf. 'My doctrine shall drop as the rain' (Deut. xxxii. 2). The latter rain is that which falls in March and April, which enables the now ripening grain to reach maturity (Jer. iii. 3; Os. vi. 3; Joel ii. 23).

24. While others were speaking, Job's face was closely watched for signs of his approval or otherwise. If he showed disagreement, the views were rejected; if he showed assent, they were accepted with alacrity. *They believed not*, i.e. they rejected the view which was being expressed. *If I were pleased*. The second clause might be translated: 'And the light of my face they did not let fall,' i.e. they did not fail to notice Job's smile of approval. But the parallelism indicates that 'light' is to be taken as a verb: 'If my face shone' i.e. if I showed approval. For the idiom see Ps. iv. 7, xlv. 4, lxxxix. 16, Prov. xvi. 15. *They did not dissent*. Lit. 'they let not fall.' The object is the same as that of 'believed not,' namely, the view which was being expressed.

25. This verse sums up the general relation of Job to the assembly, and leads on to the description of his present state. He was their chief guide in council, and their comforter in time of trouble. *Their way*, i.e. the course of action to be adopted



by them in a given case. *In the army.* Job received the same respect and unquestioning obedience as a king from his army. Many modern critics regard the third clause as out of harmony with the context, and either change it (Dhorme) or omit it (Budde), or transfer it to verse 24. But the whole verse is a summary of what has gone before: his relations with the elders (25a), with the people in general (24b) and with those in trouble (24c). The last clause refers back to 11-13.

xxx. 1. Now he has to endure the contempt of base-born youths. *Whose fathers I would not put*, etc. This is often taken to mean 'whose fathers I would not make my shepherds.' But this does not bring out the contrast between the elders of 8ff and the youths. The meaning is that their fathers were so despicable that he would not compare them with his dogs. They were the very dregs of humanity, as he proceeds to describe. Instead of being honoured by the old and noble, he is despised by the young and ignoble.

2-8. What was their social status compared to his? They were social outcasts, gaunt with hunger, living on the scanty food of the desert, dwelling in caves and sleeping among the nettles and shrubs.

2. Job digresses to describe the character of the men who now revile him. The description is intended to contrast with that of Job himself in the days of his prosperity (xxix. 2ff). Now he has fallen lower than even these outcasts. *What was it to me?* This is usually translated: 'Of what avail would it be to me?' and taken as the reason why he would not make them his shepherds, viz. because of their lack of bodily vigour. But the phrase means 'What matters it to me?' (Gen. xxvii. 6; Is. i. 11; Jer. vi. 20; Am. v. 18), i.e. what was it in comparison with mine?

3b-c). This verse reads in the Hebrew: 'Who gnaw the arid land—yesterday—waste and desolation.' The two problems which confront critics here are: a) to find an appropriate object for the verb 'gnaw'; b) to discover the word of which 'yesterday' is a corruption. It is a question of *quot homines tot sententiae*. The view adopted here has the virtue of simplicity: 'yesterday' is a corruption of the word 'man' which has dropped out of 5a, and 'arid land' is a corruption of the word for 'food.' The change of one letter in each case is all that is necessary. The 'food of waste and desolation' is explained in verse 4, as the wild herbs like the mallow and the broom. *Waste and desolation* means wilderness, the district remote from the abodes of men (xxxviii. 27; Soph. i. 15; Ecclus. li. 10).

4. *The mallow* or salt-wort is found in abundance along the shore of the Dead Sea. "It has small, thick, sour-tasting leaves which could be eaten" (Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 486). *Leaves of shrubs.* The Hebrew might be translated 'the mallow on the shrub' or 'the mallow beside the shrub'—neither very satisfactory. Syriac inserts the conjunction, and

reads '*and leaves of shrubs*,' which is much more natural, and is probably original. *Broom* or juniper, the tree under which Elias rested in the desert (1 K. xix. 4-5). It has roots which are very bitter. Job mentions plants which would be used for food only in the most extreme cases.

5. The first part of the verse is too short: 'from society were they driven out,' and 'society' (lit. 'the midst') is too vague to suffice by itself without qualification. It is true that in Phoenician and in Syriac the word means 'community,' but we should expect at least the article to qualify it. It is suggested above that the original complement was the word 'men,' which was omitted by mistake, and later inserted in a corrupt form in verse 3.

6. They had to make their home in remote wadys (*cf.* xxiv. 8), where they lived in caves like the wild animals.

7. For want of clothing, they huddle together under the nettles or weeds, and groan and cry out in their misery. *They cry out.* The verb is used in vi. 5 for the *braying* of the ass. It has been chosen here to imply that in all their habits they were like wild animals. *Nettles.* The precise meaning is not certain. It was a plant that grew in uncultivated places (Prov. xxiv. 34; Soph. ii. 9).

8. They were the dregs of humanity. *Ignoble . . . brood*, lit. 'sons of a base one, sons of a nameless one.' The word for 'ignoble' is often translated 'fool'; but the primitive meaning is 'base.' In Is. xxxii. 5, it is the antithesis of 'noble.' Job and they belonged to the two extremes of the social scale.

9-14a. Now they deride me, and treat me as an outcast. Because God has humbled me, they calumniate me. They lay siege to me like an army, and I can offer no resistance.

9. He now resumes the theme of verse 1, which was interrupted by the description of the outcasts (2-8). *Their song*, *cf.* Lam. iii. 14.

10. They have now changed places with him—he is the outcast in their eyes. In xix. 13ff, he complained that his friends had abandoned him, and in xvii. 6, that he was a 'by-word to the peoples,' and 'one whose face was spit upon.'

11. This verse is very difficult. Lit. 'For he loosed his (or my) cord and afflicted me, and the bridle from my face they cast off.' The subject is singular in the first part, and plural in the second; the text varies between 'his' (*ketib*) and 'my' (*qeri*), and the object of the first verb is capable of several interpretations.

If we begin with the second clause, and read 'from their mouth' instead of 'from my face,' we obtain a clause which is in perfect accord with the context. In Psalm xxxix. 2, we have the phrase: 'I will put a muzzle on my mouth' i.e. to avoid sins of the tongue. Here Job complains that his enemies have 'cast away the bridle from their mouth,' they speak against him without restraint.

Coming to the first part of the verse, we are faced with several alternatives: a) 'He hath loosed *my* bow-string' i.e. He (God) has rendered me powerless—the antithesis to xxix. 20 (Peake, Duhm). b) He hath loosed *his* bow-string' i.e. He has pierced me with His arrows (*cf.* vi. 4). c) 'He hath loosed my excellency' (*cf.* 'he hath stripped off my glory,' xix. 9). The first two give good sense, but in each case the verb is not appropriate (lit. 'open'). The third view is open to no such objection. The noun is used in this sense in iv. 21 and xxii. 20, and particularly in Prov. xvii. 7. The verb is used in the sense 'strip off' in xii. 18 (*cf.* Is. xx. 2; xlv. 1; Ps. xxx. 12). The whole verse recalls xix. 5, in which Job complains that his friends have made his sufferings proof of his guilt. The wretches described in 2–8 likewise look upon Job as smitten by God, and so treat him as guilty.

12. They become his accusers. *At the right hand*, i.e. as accusers (Ps. cix. 6; Zach. iii. 1). So in xvi. 8 'he (i.e. Eliphaz) hath become a witness . . . my traducer.' The word 'brood' occurs only here, but the meaning is certain. We should possibly read with the Targum '*their* brood,' i.e. the children of verse 1, whose 'fathers' he would not compare with his dogs. The second clause has caused considerable difficulty and most critics either omit it altogether (Budde, Merx, Wright, Duhm, Peake) or emend it drastically (Hontheim, Gray, Dhorme). Lit. 'they send the foot.' The key to the difficulty is to regard the noun as meaning 'slander' instead of the usual meaning 'foot.' It does not occur in this sense elsewhere, but the verb occurs in Ps. xv. 3; 2 S. xix. 28; Eccus. iv. 28; v. 14. This is exactly what is required here. We have a parallel in the passage already quoted: 'my traducer who giveth testimony against me.' These outcasts slander him by accusing him of sin.

12c–13a. The metaphor is that of an army besieging a fortress. They build up earthworks against him, and cut off his escape. *Cf.* xvi. 12ff.

13b–14a. The metaphor of the siege is continued. The besiegers meet with no resistance, and pour in through the broken defences. *None to restrain them.* The Hebrew has 'there is no *helper* to them,' but this is generally regarded as corrupt. Most critics read the verb 'restrain' instead of 'help'; Driver (*cf.* A.J.S.L. April 1936, p. 160ff) holds that there is no need for emendation, as the same verb means both 'to help' and 'to restrain.'

The second part of verse 14 reads, literally, 'under destruction (or a tempest) they rolled themselves about.' Dhorme takes 'destruction' to mean the ruins of the fortress (12c–13a), and regards the phrase as '*très expressive*.' The figure of the besiegers rolling themselves under the debris is anything but expressive. The verb is used in 2 Sam. xx. 12 of Amasa 'wallowing' in his blood. But the Greek has the first person instead of the third, and this points the way to the true interpretation. The clause is parallel to 15a, and describes the disaster

which deprived him of his prosperity. We should read 'Under a storm I was rolled.'

14b-19. Sudden disaster put an end to my prosperity; my body was afflicted with disease. God has hurled me from my high station down to the dust.

14b-15a. In this strophe Job attributes the change in his status to the two series of calamities with which God suddenly afflicted him—the loss of his prosperity, and the disease which covers his whole body. Cf. xvii. 12-16, xix. 7ff. *Under a storm*. This is the meaning of the word in Ezech. xxxviii. 9 and Prov. i. 27, and the reference to 'wind' in v. 15, and to 'wind' and 'storm' in v. 22 favours the same interpretation here. In xxvii. 20 'terror' and 'tempest' are parallel terms as here. Cf. 'He breaketh me with a tempest' (ix. 17). The tenses of the verbs here and in 17a indicate that he is referring to some event of the past.

15b-c. As a result of the first calamity (i. 13ff), his prosperity came to an end. *Mine honour*, i.e. the exalted position in society which he described in xxix. 1ff. *Was chased*. In the Heb. the verb is active, the subject being 'storm.' But this gives the unnatural comparison: 'It (the storm) chased away mine honour like the wind.' It is better to change the pointing and read the passive. *As by the wind*. Cf. Ps. i. 4. *Like a cloud*, the symbol of what is evanescent, and disappears without leaving a trace (vii. 9). *My welfare*, my prosperity.

16. *And now*, cf. 1 and 9. *My soul poureth itself out* is a figure which expresses the extremity of his misery (Ps. xxii. 15; xlii. 5). Instead of his former happiness there have come 'days of affliction.' Cf. xvii. 15-16, xix. 8.

17. The second calamity (cf. ii. 7ff). Both night and day he endures unceasing torture. *Are pierced*. The Hebrew has 'he pierced.' The subject may be indefinite (cf. Dhorme), but it is better to make 'bones' subject and read the passive (cf. Vulg.). Instead of 'my gnawers,' Greek has 'my nerves,' Syr. 'my body'; but these are probably free translations. Dhorme, on the basis of the Arabic, translates 'my veins.' But the expression '(pains) that gnaw me' is as natural as 'his skin shall be devoured by disease' or 'the first-born of death shall devour his limbs' (xviii. 13).

18. God has seized him and hurled him to the dust (cf. xvii. 15-16). The subject in this and the following verse is God (cf. 11). This becomes clear when we compare the parallel verse in xvi. 12: 'He took me by the neck, and dashed me to pieces.' God is conceived as a mighty warrior, who seized his opponent and dashed him to the ground. *He seized*. The Hebrew has 'my garment is disfigured,' which must be taken to refer to the decaying matter which covers his body like a garment. But many modern scholars read with the Greek 'he seized,' which accords better with the next verse. *The collar*, lit. 'the mouth,' i.e. the opening at the neck. Cf. xvi. 12.

19. *Like dust and ashes*. Job is not referring to his external

appearance (*cf.* 'my flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust,' vii. 5). The words are used figuratively (*cf.* xvi. 15), to describe his present humiliation in contrast with his former state. *Cf.* Ps. xxii. 15: 'Thou hast brought me down to the dust of death.'

20-25. God not only refuses to grant redress, but becomes a ruthless persecutor. For it is He that sent the storm of calamity, and soon He will cause his death. Yet Job has done nothing to deserve this; on the contrary, he showed sympathy with the unfortunate.

20. Here Job turns to address God directly, as in vii. 12ff; x. 2ff; xiii. 19ff; xvii. 3ff. There is an implied contrast with xxix. 2-5. How different the relation between Job and God then and now; *I stand*, is an attitude of prayer. The negative of 'thou regardest *not*' is not in the present text, but the parallelism shows that it must have been in the original (*cf.* Vulg.). It is found in one MS.

21. God has changed from a friend to an enemy (*cf.* xiii. 24; xix. 11). Thou *assaiest*. Greek has 'thou scourgest,' which may be original.

22. This verse refers back to 14b-15. Job compared the disaster which brought about his ruin to a storm under which he was rolled about, and a wind which carried off his honour. Here he expressly states that God was the author of the storm—He made him ride on the *wind*, and tossed him about on the *storm*. *Tossed about*. The verb is usually taken in the sense of 'melt'—'thou *dissolvest* me in the storm.' But the primary meaning of the word is 'to undulate,' hence 'to shake' (Amos ix. 4; Is. xlvi. 7), 'to toss to and fro.' It is equivalent to 'I was rolled about' of v. 14. *by the storm*. The Hebrew word does not occur elsewhere. It is probably the same word as that used in verse 14 with the addition of the preposition.

23. Job is still convinced that there is no hope of recovery. *Cf.* xxiii. 14. *Death* is here equivalent to 'Sheol,' as the second clause shows. *Cf.* xxviii. 22. Sheol is the common destiny of all men, the 'house of his eternity' (Eccles. xii. 5, *cf.* iii. 13-19).

24. This verse is obviously corrupt. The Hebrew of the first clause may be translated: 'Surely, *in ruin* doth not one stretch forth the hand?', or 'Surely, *against a ruin* (i.e. Job himself) one doth not stretch forth the hand.' But the word 'ruin' is a most unusual one either for 'calamity,' or to designate the afflicted. A favourite emendation is 'Will not *one sinking* stretch forth the hand?' (Budde, Duhm, Gray, Peake). But the change required is considerable, and is doubtful if the sense obtained suits the context. Such a thought might have been suitable in vi. 11-12, where Job is apologising for the violence of his language. The simplest solution is that adopted by Wright and others, viz. the reading 'poor' for 'ruin' (parallel to 'needy'). Job has just complained that God not only refuses to hear his prayer but treats him harshly (21-22). He contrasts

this with his own dealings with his fellow-men. By his kindness to others when they were in trouble he deserved that God should answer his prayer for help in similar circumstances. *I did not stretch.* So Greek. The present Hebrew makes the statement more general by the use of the third person '*one doth not stretch,*' The reference to Job's own conduct is more natural. The second part of the verse also is obscure: '*If in his calamity to them a cry.*' The last word can be pointed as a verb; but there remains '*to them,*' which has no meaning in the context. Dhorme reads '*to me,*' which is suitable, but too drastic; a trifling change of one consonant gives '*for redress.*'

25. Job pitied others who were in distress, why does God not have compassion on his misery in return? Cf. xxxi. 16-20.

26-31. Instead of the reward which he expected and deserved, there have come misfortune and unceasing pain; instead of his former happy state, his present misery.

26. In xxix. 18 he has stated that his virtuous life entitled him to hope for a happy old age. But alas, how different has been his lot! *Light and darkness* are symbols of happiness and woe, cf. xii. 25; xxiii. 17.

27. This verse and the following describes his present woes. *My bowels boil*, the bowels are the seat of the emotions, cf. Lam. i. 20; ii. 11. His mental agony is unceasing.

28. The first clause is usually translated: '*I walk gloomy, and not by (or in) the sun,*' and is interpreted in two ways: figuratively, '*I walk in sorrow, and in a sunless or miserable condition*'; and literally, '*I walk darkened, but not by the sun*' i.e. but by disease. The difficulty against the first is that '*sunless*' is never used figuratively elsewhere; against the second, that it anticipates verse 29. Some critics therefore emend the text by reading '*without consolation*' (Budde, Duhm), or '*without joy*' (Voigt), instead of '*not by the sun.*' But we have the same word in xxix. 6, meaning '*butter,*' and the fact that there is a contrast between his present misery and his former happiness as described in the first strophe is in favour of the same meaning here. Just as the second part of the verse refers back to xxix. 7ff (his appearance in the assembly in former days), this clause refers back to xxix. 6: '*my steps were washed with butter.*' He walks about, but his feet are no longer '*washed with butter,*' he is no longer in affluence. *I cry out.* In former days he championed the cause of those who cried out for help (xxix. 12); now he has to be a suppliant himself.

29. By his constant complaining he resembles the jackals and ostriches. Cf. Mich. i. 8, '*I will make a wailing like the jackals, and mourning as the ostriches.*'

30. *My bones are burnt*, i.e. dried up. This is the antithesis of '*the marrow of his bones is moist*' (xxi. 24). The former is a sign of weakness and decrepitude, the latter of the full vigour of manhood.

31. My songs of joy are changed to songs of mourning.

## SOPHAR'S THIRD SPEECH, xxv.-xxvi., 5-14.

*Argument.* In this, the concluding speech of the three friends, Sophar gives a final warning to Job. On the one hand, man is essentially impure; on the other, God's might is irresistible. He is supreme in the heavens, in the depths of Sheol, and throughout the length and breadth of the created universe.

a) *God rules in the heavens.* The angels are subject to Him, and constitute an army which is irresistible. Man is essentially impure, compared with God (xxv. 2-6).

b) *God rules even in Sheol.* The Rephaim tremble before Him, for even in Sheol they are not hidden from His gaze. All that intervenes between His heavenly abode and Sheol—firmament, earth, clouds—is His creation (xxvi. 5-9).

c) *God rules from end to end of creation.* Everything as far as the distant horizon is His work; and He manifests His power at intervals by phenomena in earth and sea and heavens (10-14).

For the reconstruction of this Speech see note on Chapters xxv.-xxxi., p. 163.

*Strophic arrangement* : 5 : 5 : 5.

xxv. 1 And Sophar the Namaathite answered and said :

- 2 Domination and terror are with Him,  
Who maketh peace in His high places ;
- 3 Is there any number of His troops ?  
And against whom doth not His ambush rise ?
- 4 And how can man be just before God ?  
And how can one born of woman be pure ?
- 5 Lo, even the moon is not bright,  
And the stars are not pure in His sight ;
- 6 How much less man, a maggot,  
And the son of man, a worm !

xxvi. 5 The Rephaim tremble

- Beneath the waters and the denizens thereof ;
- 6 Sheol is naked before Him,  
And Abaddon hath no covering ;
- 7 Who stretched out the North over void,  
And hung the earth upon nothing ;
- 8 Who bound up the waters in His clouds,  
And the clouds were not rent under them ;
- 9 Who covered the face of His pavilion,  
Spreading His cloud about Him.

- 10 He drew a bound upon the surface of the waters,  
At the confines of light and darkness ;
- 11 The pillars of the heavens tremble,  
And are dismayed at His rebuke ;
- 12 By His might He stilled the sea,  
And by His intelligence He smote Rahab ;
- 13 His breath made the heavens bright,  
His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.
- 14 Lo, these are but the fringes of His ways,  
How small a whisper we hear of Him !  
And the thunder of His power who can under-  
stand ?

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xxv. 1. 1. צופר הנעמתי. MT בלדר השחי. 3b. 1. אורבו.  
(G.). MT אורהו. 5a. 1. יהל (Versions). MT יאהל. xxvi.  
9a. 1. ספה (cf. Jer. xxv. 38 ; Ps. lxxvi. 3). MT כפה.  
9b. 1. פרש (Targ. Syr.). MT פרשו. 10a. 1. חק חג (Syr.  
Targ. Cf. Prov. viii. 27). MT חק-חג. 13a. 1. רוחו. MT  
ברוחו (ב dittogr.).



## COMMENTARY.

xxv. 2-6. God rules in the heavens ; His might is irresistible ; man is essentially impure, compared with God.

1. In the introductory formula the name 'Sophar the Namaathite' must be substituted for 'Bildad the Shuhite' (see above, p. 163).

2. Sophar begins with a summary of the argument of the first Speech of Eliphaz : man is naturally impure, and it is folly to resist the might of God (*cf.* iv. 17-v. 2). *Who maketh peace*, i.e. who rules effectively. *In His high places*, in the heavens, including the angels and the heavenly bodies (*cf.* ix. 13 ; xxi. 22 ; Is. xxiv. 21 ; xl. 26). If He is able to rule the angels, He is able to subdue and strike terror into men like Job, if they venture to defy Him.

3. He commands an innumerable host, which has never known defeat. *His ambush*. The Hebrew has 'His light,' which must be taken to mean that none is concealed from God. But the verb ('rise') is not the usual word for the rising or shining of the sun, and hence the Greek reading 'ambush,' which carries on the metaphor, is to be preferred. *Rise*, i.e. from the place of ambush ; or the word may be translated 'succeed.'

4. This and the following verses are based on the argument of Eliphaz in iv. 17ff and xv. 14-15. The first clause has been used by Job himself in ix. 2.

5. *Cf.* 'His servants . . . the angels' (iv. 7), and 'His holy ones' . . . 'the heavens' (xv. 15).

6. *Cf.* iv. 19 ; xv. 14. *A maggot . . . a worm*, *cf.* 'Fear not, thou worm Jacob, thou maggot Israel' (Is. xli. 14). Eliphaz argued from the fact that a man's body is a 'house of clay,' and therefore perishable (iv. 19). Sophar probably means the same by the figure of the worm, the symbol of decay and corruption (vii. 5 ; xvii. 4).

xxvi. 5-9. God's power extends even to the recesses of Sheol. All that intervenes is His own creation. The same thought is implied in xxxviii. 17. *Cf.* xxviii. 21-22.

5. *Rephaim*, the dead, denizens of Sheol (Ps. lxxxviii. 11 ; Prov. ii. 18 ; ix. 18 ; xxi. 16 ; Is. xiv. 9 ; xxvi. 14, 19). The name is also applied to the race of giants who were supposed to have been the primitive inhabitants of Palestine (Gen. xv. 20 ; Deut. ii. 11), and is so translated by Theod., Symm. and Aquila here. *Beneath the waters*. The earth was conceived as floating on the waters of the Abyss (*cf.* 'the waters under the earth' in Ex. xx. 4 ; Deut. iv. 18 ; v. 8), and Sheol was situated 'beneath the waters.' Hence it is sometimes described as 'the lowest parts of the earth' (Ps. lxxiii. 10 ; Is. xliv. 23). Some critics attach 'beneath' to 5a (*cf.* Dhorme), and make 'the waters and the denizens thereof' a second subject to 'tremble' ; but this misses the whole point of the passage. The meaning

is that God's power and knowledge reach beyond the earth and beyond the Abyss even to the depths of Sheol. This is clear from the next verse, which mentions Sheol only.

6. They tremble, for even they are under the eyes of God. The same thought is found in Prov. xv. 11: 'Sheol and Abaddon are before Jahweh' (cf. Ps. cxxxix. 7ff; Amos ix. 2f). *Abaddon* (destruction), a synonym of Sheol. Cf. *Appolyon* in Apoc. ix. 11.

7. For the firmament and the earth and the clouds which intervene between His heavenly abode and Sheol are all His work. *The North*. The use of the term 'stretched out' (cf. ix. 8) indicates that 'the North' is equivalent to the 'firmament' or the 'heavens' (cf. Is. xiv. 13). *Void* is chaos or emptiness as in Gen. i. 2. The earth also is supported on 'nothing'. Compare the description in Psalms lxxiv. 15-17 and lxxxix. 12-13.

8. He created the clouds, which are called elsewhere 'the water-skins of heaven' (xxxviii. 37; cf. xxxvii. 27; Prov. xxx. 4; Ps. xxxiii. 7).

9. The storm-clouds form God's 'covert' or 'tent.' *Pavilion*. The form in Hebrew is exceptional, and modern critics regard the word as a defective writing either of the word for 'throne' or of the word for 'full moon.' Of the first it may be remarked, with Dhorme, that if the heavens are conceived as the throne of God, it is not the *face* of the throne that is covered by the clouds. But the translation 'full moon' which he favours is no better. Why mention the 'full moon' rather than 'the moon,' or 'the sun,' or the 'heavens'? A very slight change gives the word for 'tent' or 'pavilion' which is used in a similar connection in Jer. xxv. 38; Ps. x. 9; xxvii. 5; lxxvi. 3. The same thought is expressed by Elihu in xxxvi. 30: 'He spreadeth His mist about Him,' and in Ps. xviii. 11: 'He made darkness His hiding-place, His pavilion round about Him.'

10-14. God's power extends throughout the length and breadth of the created universe. Compare xxxviii. 16, where a reference to the 'breadth of the earth' follows the mention of the 'gates of Death,' and xi. 7ff, where Sophar speaks of the height and the depth, the length and the breadth of God's knowledge. Cf. xxviii. 13ff.

10. The realm of creation is conceived as bounded by the distant horizon, where the vault of heaven appears to rest on the ocean. This is the boundary within which light and darkness alternate to produce day and night, and over all the elements of creation within this boundary God reigns supreme. *At the confines of*. Not where light and darkness meet, but the boundary within which they exercise their functions. His power is manifested at intervals in the natural phenomena.

11. The earthquake manifests his power over the land. *The pillars of heaven* are the mountains, which appear to support the firmament, as the tent-poles support a tent. Cf. 'The foundations of the hills moved and were shaken because He was wroth' (Ps. xviii. 7).

12. He can calm the turbulent waves of the sea as He overthrew Rahab of old. *He stilled.* The 'stilling of the sea' is often referred to in descriptions of the omnipotence of God (Ps. lxxv. 7; lxxxix. 9; xciii. 4). Many commentators translate 'He stirred up the sea' and refer to Is. li. 15 and Jer. xxxi. 35 for this meaning of the verb. But the other is the more usual meaning of the verb, and the parallel clause, as well as the passages from Psalms cited above, favour the meaning 'stilled.' *He smote Rahab.* Cf. ix. 13; Is. li. 9. The stilling of the sea is but the renewal of the conquest of Chaos.

13. God's power over the clouds is shown when He sends a wind to disperse them, making the heavens clear once more. Cf. 'A wind passeth and cleanseth them' (xxxvii. 21-22). *His breath.* The Hebrew has 'with His breath'; but the parallelism with 'His hand' shows that 'breath' should be the subject of the verb, and the preposition is to be omitted. It has arisen through dittography. *The fleeing serpent.* This is identified with Leviathan in Is. xxvii. 1 (cf. Job iii. 8); it is a personification of the clouds, as Rahab is of the sea. The chasing of the clouds, like the stilling of the sea, is a repetition of the conquest of the powers of Chaos.

14. All these phenomena are but the slightest indications of the immensity of God's power and wisdom. *Fringes . . . whisper.* Sophar uses two figures to convey the immensity of God's power and wisdom: the features of His work that are visible to man are to the whole as the fringes to the complete garment; and what is known by the wise compared to the full knowledge of God is as a whisper compared with thunder. *Do we hear.* Sophar speaks as one of the wise, who has learned the traditional wisdom of the ancients.

## JOB'S REPLY TO SOPHAR, xxvii. 1-6 + xxxi.

*Argument.* Job winds up the debate by making a solemn protestation of his innocence of all crimes which might have been the cause of his present sufferings. He begins with a statement that God has 'taken away his right,' and a solemn oath that what he is about to assert is true (xxvii. 1-6).

a) The first point is developed in the second strophe: by his innocence he deserved immunity from suffering; but God by afflicting him has 'taken away his right.' Suffering should be the lot of the wicked alone. What is the explanation? Does God not know that he is innocent? Or has he really sinned? A fair trial would prove him innocent (xxx. 1-6).

b) The rest of the Speech contains his solemn protestation of innocence. He enumerates a long catalogue of sins, and in each case asserts his innocence: covetousness, theft and adultery (7-12), unkindness towards the slave, the poor, the widow and the orphan (13-18), want of mercy and justice in legal transactions with the poor and helpless (19-23), avarice, idolatry and hatred (25-30), miserliness and tyranny (31-32, 38-40).

Job has nothing to hide. Nay, his conduct has been such that he is prepared to declare it publicly, and to face an impartial judge with confidence (33-37).

For the reconstruction of the Speech see Introductory Note to Chapters xxv-xxx.

*Strophic arrangement* : 5 : 6 : 5.

xxvii. 1 And Job answered and said :

- 2 As God liveth, who hath taken away my right,  
And the Almighty who hath made sad my soul,
- 3 While my breath is still wholly in me,  
And the spirit of God is in my nostrils,
- 4 Surely, my lips speak not falsehood,  
And my tongue uttereth not deceit ;
- 5 God forbid that I should declare you in the right !  
Till my last breath I will not give up my integrity ;
- 6 My justice I have held fast, and I will not let it go,  
My heart shall not reproach me while I live.

- xxx. 1 I made a covenant with mine eyes,  
And why must I contemplate calamity ?
- 2 And what is the portion of God from above ?  
And the heritage of the Almighty from on high ?

- 3 Is not ruin for the wicked ?  
    And adversity for the doers of evil ?
- 4 Doth he not see my ways ?  
    And number all my steps ?
- 5 Or have I walked with vanity ?  
    And hath my foot hasted towards deceit ?
- 6 Let him weigh me in a true balance,  
    And let God know my integrity !
- 7 If my step hath turned from the way,  
    And my hand hath gone after my eyes,  
    Or if aught hath cleaved to my hands,
- 8 Let me sow, and let another reap,  
    And let my offspring be rooted out !
- 9 If my heart hath erred concerning a woman,  
    And I have lain in wait at my neighbour's door,
- 10 Let my wife grind for another,  
    And let others bow down upon her !
- 11 (*For that were a crime,*  
    *That an offence for the judges.*)
- 12 For that were a crime that consumeth to Abaddon,  
    And burneth up all my increase.
- 13 If I rejected the right of my man-servant,  
    Or my maid-servant, when they contended with  
    me,
- 14 What then should I do, when God should rise up,  
    And when He visited, what should I answer Him?
- 15 Did not He that made me in the womb make him  
    also ?  
    Did not the Same fashion us in the belly ?
- 16 If I withheld from the poor what they desired,  
    And made the eyes of the widow to languish,
- 17 And have eaten my morsel alone,  
    And the orphan ate not thereof—
- 18 For from my youth He brought me up like a father,  
    And from my mother's womb He did guide me.

- 19 If I saw one destitute, without clothing,  
Or that a poor man had no covering,  
20 Surely, his loins blessed me,  
And with the fleece of my sheep he was warmed ;  
21 If I waved my hand against the orphan,  
Because I saw my help in the gate,  
22 Let my shoulder fall from the shoulder-blade,  
And my arm be broken from its socket !  
23 For the terror of God would come upon me,  
And before His majesty I could not endure.
- 24 If I have made gold my confidence,  
Or said to fine gold : My trust !  
25 If I rejoiced because my substance was great.  
And because my hand had gotten much,  
26 If I beheld the sun when it shone,  
And the moon moving in splendour,  
27 And my heart was secretly seduced,  
So that my hand kissed my mouth,  
28 (*This also is a crime for the judges*)  
And I disowned God above.  
29 If I rejoiced in the ruin of him that hated me,  
Or exulted when calamity overtook him—  
30 And I allowed not my palate to sin,  
By asking his life with a curse.
- 31 Verily, the men of my tent have said :  
Who can show one who hath not been sated with  
his meat ?  
32 The stranger did not pass the night in the street,  
I opened my door to the wayfarer ;  
[38 If my land cried out against me,  
And the furrows thereof wept together,  
39 If I ate of the produce thereof without payment,  
And caused the owners thereof to expire,  
40 Instead of wheat let thistles grow,  
And noxious weeds instead of barley !]

- 33 If I concealed my transgressions as men do,  
     By hiding my iniquities within my bosom,  
 34 Because I feared the crowd of the city,  
     And the scorn of families terrified me,  
     So that I remained quiet, and went not out of doors—  
 35 Oh would that I had one to hear me !  
     Behold my last word, let the Almighty answer me !  
     And the scroll which His adversary hath written !  
 36 Verily, on my shoulder would I bear it,  
     I would bind it on like a diadem,  
 37 At every step would I declare it,  
     Like a prince would I present it.

40c (*The words of Job are ended.*)

## CRITICAL NOTES.

- xxvii. 1. 1. וַיִּעַן אִיּוֹב וַיֹּאמֶר. M T מִשְׁלוֹ וַיִּעַן אִיּוֹב וַיֹּאמֶר. 6b. 1. יְהִפֹּךְ (Duhm, Dhorme). M T יִחַרְרֶף. xxxi. 1b. 1. תִּשְׁרֹף. M T בְּתוֹלָה. 11. Omit (gloss). 12b. 1. תִּשְׁרֹף. M T תִּשְׁרֹשׁ (cf. 8b). 18a. 1. גִּדְלִנִּי. M T גִּדְלִנִּי. 18b. 1. אֵל יֵאָתֶא לִּי (G. Vulg. Syr.). M T אֵלִי אֵיד אֵל. 28a. Omit (gloss, cf. 11). 32b. לְאֶרֶץ (G. Syr. Targ. Vulg.). M T לְאֶרֶץ. 35c. רִיבוֹ. M T רִיבִי. 38-40 transp. post 32. 40c. Omit (gloss).

## COMMENTARY.

xxvii. 1-6. Job solemnly swears that what he is about to assert is true.

1. The introductory formula is the same as that in xxix. 1; but, as in that passage, it has probably taken the place of the usual 'And Job answered and said.' See note on Chapters xxv.-xxxi.

2. *As God liveth*, the usual formula to introduce an oath. The statement to which he swears is twofold: that he will never speak falsehood (3-4), and that he never has sinned (5-6). *My right*. His innocence deserved immunity from suffering; by afflicting him God has deprived him of his right. Elihu deals with this statement in xxxiv. 5.

3. The introductory particle is usually taken to mean 'because' and the whole clause is regarded as a parenthesis explaining that Job is still in possession of all his mental faculties and therefore capable of testifying on his own behalf (*cf.* 2 S. i. 9). But the parallelism with 5b and 6b ('till my last breath,' 'while I live') is in favour of the view taken by Jerome: *Donec superest halitus in me*.

4. *Cf.* vi. 29-30. As in the passage cited, Job is asserting the truth of the statement he is about to make.

5. The statement will not be a confession of guilt, nor an admission that the friends are right in their contention. *Cf.* v. 8ff; viii. 5ff; xi. 13ff. *I will not give up*, i.e. I will not cease to maintain that I am innocent. The clause has the same meaning as 5a: if he relinquished his claim to be innocent, he would concede that they were in the right.

6. *I have held fast . . . I will not let go*. *Cf.* 'Dost thou still hold fast to thine integrity?' The latter passage shows that the meaning is: I have been innocent, and am determined to remain innocent. *My heart*, i.e. my conscience. *While I live*, lit. 'from my days.' The same expression is used in xxxviii. 12 ('since thy days began').

xxxi. 1-6. A life of virtue deserved immunity from suffering; suffering should be for the wicked alone. Yet God has treated Job as if he had sinned.

1. This strophe is the explanation of the first clause of xxvii. 1: 'who hath taken away my right.' *I made a covenant with*. Job throughout his life had acted on the understanding that if he avoided sin he would not experience sorrow. This was the covenant or bargain he made with his eyes. The fact that he now has to look upon calamity is a violation of the bargain. *Upon calamity*. The Hebrew text has 'upon a virgin,' which must be taken to mean that he refrained not only from unchaste acts but from unchaste looks (*cf.* Ecclus. ix. 5). But though this reading has the support of the Versions, it is objectionable on several grounds: a) The mention of a special type of sin is unlikely, for the strophe deals with the law of retribution, and



with virtue and vice in general; b) the reference to a 'virgin' would be better in place in connection with adultery (9ff); c) the particular force of the word 'covenant' is lost in the present text; it does not mean 'law' but an agreement which supposes a *quid pro quo*. Peake suggests a general word for sin, e.g. 'folly,' but this leaves the third difficulty unanswered. The translation given above requires the change of only one letter (cf. Lev. xxvi. 16; Is. lxv. 23; Ps. lxxviii. 33).

2. For what is God's law of retribution? Is it not that ruin falls on the wicked alone? This is the view expressed by the three friends (iv. 7-8; viii. 20; xx. 29), and formerly held by Job himself, until calamity befell him (xxvii. 7ff).

3. *Adversity*, lit. 'enmity'; but the word is used in Obad. 12 in the more general sense of 'misfortune.' Cf. x. 3c.

4. Job's fate is a contradiction of the law of retribution as he once understood it. What is the explanation? Does God not see what happens on earth, and is He therefore unaware of Job's innocence? Cf. x. 4-7. xxiii. 10, 17; xxiv. 17ff; 23.

5. If God is not aware of Job's innocence, let Him hold an investigation, and He will find that he is innocent. *Walked with* i.e. associated with. *Vanity*, worthlessness or wickedness in general, here has special reference to impiety, or rebellion against God. The abstract is used for the concrete 'impious.' Job has not associated with the impious. *Deceit* has particular reference to fraud and injustice against men. The two terms include sins against God and sins against men.

6. Cf. xxiii. 10; xxiv. 17. Job is convinced that if God were to intervene in judgment, both he and the wicked would receive their deserts. *My integrity* refers back to the introductory strophe (xxvii. 5).

7-12. Sins against justice and chastity.

7. Job now enters into the details of his life, and enumerates a long catalogue of vices to which men are liable, and in each case asserts his innocence. He begins with sins of injustice. He has never departed from the way of strict justice (7a), either by thought (7b), or by deed (7c). The temptation to injustice begins with the eyes, which see the thing coveted, then follows the consent (heart), and the actual taking of the neighbour's property. *Aught*. The word may also be translated 'a spot' (cf. Deut. xiii. 18; 1 Sam. xii. 5).

8. Such a crime would have deserved the chastisement of death both of himself and of his family. With the first clause compare xx. 10, 18; xxvii. 17. With his own death others would enter into possession; but not his own children. These also would be 'rooted out.' Cf. xv. 30; xviii. 19. Some critics take the second clause to refer to his crops; but this would involve a contradiction with 8a, and the parallel clauses show that the reference is to the destruction of his whole race.

9. The sin of adultery. *Lain in wait*, i.e. watching for the husband's departure (cf. Prov. vii. 6, 9, 19).

10. The crime of adultery was primarily an injury to the

husband; hence the due chastisement would be that his wife be taken by another. But the implication is that his wife is made a slave consequent on his own death. *Grind*. The grinding of the corn for the household was done by the women or by slaves (*cf.* Exod. xi. 5; Is. xlvii. 2).

11. *A crime*. The word is used especially for sexual offences (Lev. xviii. 17; xx. 14; Jud. xx. 6). The 'judges' were those appointed to assess damages in certain cases (Deut. xxii. 22-24). But elsewhere the writer never considers the sanction of the human tribunal; and in the next verse, he regards the punishment as inseparable from the sin, i.e. as due to God. Hence Grimme and Dhorme are probably right in omitting this verse as a gloss having reference to the punishment which the Law prescribed for adultery. *Cf.* 28.

12. Adultery is a crime which brings the death of the culprit and the destruction of his property. *Consumeth to Abaddon*, i.e. brings to death (*cf.* xxvi. 6). *Burneth up*. The text has 'rooteth out'; but this is probably a mistake due to verse 8. *My increase*. Job shared the belief of the friends that sin leads to poverty and death. *Cf.* xv. 21ff; xviii. 5ff; xx. 17ff.

13-18. His treatment of slaves, of the poor, the widow and the orphan.

13. According to the Law, the slave was a chattel, with few rights (Exod. xx. 10; xxi. 2ff; Lev. xxv. 39ff). But Job did not take advantage of his position; he did not spurn the claims of his slave, but investigated them, and granted him redress.

14. He recognised that a slave is a creature like himself, that he shared with him God's loving care. *Cf.* 'He that oppresseth the poor, reproacheth his Maker' (Prov. xiii. 21). *Rise up*, i.e. in judgment.

15. *Cf.* x. 8-12.

16. In this and the following verses (17-18), Job is implicitly refuting the charges made by Eliphaz in his final speech (xxii. 7-11). He satisfied the wants of the poor. *To languish*, i.e. with hunger (xi. 20; xvii. 5). The absence of the imprecation, and the change of construction makes the 'if' practically equivalent to 'surely not,' or to the interrogative particle.

17. He shared his daily meal with the orphan.

18. In his treatment of the poor he remembered that God is the common father of all, for He is their creator. In gratitude to Him for His fatherly care throughout his life, he desired to imitate Him by kindness towards those in want. *Cf.* Ps. xxii. 10ff. *He did guide me*. Heb. has 'I did guide her,' i.e. the widow. But Job could not have meant that from childhood he was the guide of the widow. The parallelism with verse 15 shows that the reference is to God's care lavished on Job himself. 'He did guide me' is the correct reading.

19-23. Job was neither harsh nor unjust in his legal transactions.

19. In xxii. 6, Eliphaz charged Job with 'stripping off the

clothes of the naked ' by retaining overnight garments taken in pledge. On the contrary, he spontaneously clothed the naked. *Destitute*, lit. ' ready to perish ' (xxix. 13).

20. *Fleece of my sheep*. Not only did Job not retain the garments of the poor, but he could point out cases where the garments were in the fullest sense his own property bestowed on the destitute.

21. *Waved the hand* to signify hostility (Is. xi. 15 ; xix. 16 ; Zach. ii. 13). He did not take advantage of his influence to oppress the orphan. *In the gate* i.e. the meeting-place at the city gate where legal business was transacted. (Cf. v. 4 ; xxii. 9).

22. The appropriate punishment for such a crime would be the maiming of the arm which was lifted. The *shoulder* and the *arm* are probably the upper arm and the forearm, respectively ; the *shoulder-blade* and the *socket*, the humerus and elbow-joint.

23. In this case also his action was influenced by a religious motive—fear of the majesty of God, who would in turn judge him. *Would come upon me*. This is the reading suggested by Greek and Syr., and accepted by the majority of modern critics. The Heb. has ' for a dread unto me is the calamity of God,' which is probably the result of a slight corruption. *I could not endure*, (cf. Is. i. 13 ; Ps. ci. 5). The verse has a close parallel in xiii. 11 : ' Will not His *majesty* terrify you, and His *terror* fall upon you ? '

24-30. He was not guilty of avarice, idolatry, or hatred of enemies.

24-25. The Psalms often speak of the wicked who trust in their wealth rather than in God (xlix. 7-8 ; lii. 9 ; lxii. 11 ; cf. Prov. xi. 28 ; Ecclus. v. 1-3). Eliphaz insinuated that Job had made a god of his riches (xxii. 23-26).

26. Job was impressed with the beauty of the rising sun, and of the moon (cf. Ps. viii. 3 ; xix. 5), but he did not confound the creature with the Creator. *The sun*, lit. ' the light,' but the parallelism with ' moon ' indicates that here as in xxxvii. 21 the sun is meant. The cult of the sun and the moon and the ' host of heaven ' became prevalent in Judah owing to Assyrian influence, particularly after the reign of Manasses (2 Kings xxi. 3ff).

27. Such adoration of the sun and moon would be practised *secretly*. Or ' secretly ' = without adverting to it. The *kissing* of idols as an act of adoration is probably referred to in 1 K. xiv. 18 ; Os. xiii. 2.

28. The first half of the verse repeats v. 11. Like adultery, punishment of idolatry was death by stoning (Deut. xiii. 7-11 ; xvii. 3-5). If verse 11 is a gloss, the same must be the case here, though Dhorme accepts this as genuine, while rejecting verse 11. In each instance it is probably a gloss explaining that the punishment of these two offences was inflicted by the judges, namely, death by stoning. 28b is the continuation of 27b.

29. The Law prescribed the succouring of one's enemy in his trouble (Exod. xxiii. 4ff), and the general teaching of the ' wise '

is contained in Proverbs: 'Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thy heart be glad when he is overthrown' (xxiv. 17. *cf.* xxv. 21-22; Ecclus. xxvii. 39; xxviii. 18). Here the violation of the primary duty towards man follows logically the violation of the primary duty towards God.

30. He neither rejoiced in the calamity which had already fallen, nor prayed for his sudden death. The change of construction, and the absence of the imprecation indicate that the particle 'if' in 24, 25, 26, and 29 is equivalent to 'surely not' (*cf.* 18).

31-32+38-40. He was hospitable towards others, both tribesmen and strangers; he was no tyrant, enriching himself by dispossessing others, or defrauding his labourers of their wages.

31. His hospitality was generous and universal. *The men of my tent*, the normal members of his own household. They bear witness that he had kept open house, and that there was none who had not at some time partaken of his hospitality. *My meat*. While the usual food consisted of bread (17), meat was served on special occasions, particularly in honour of guests.

32. This hospitality was not confined to his own tribesmen. He sheltered the stranger and the traveller (*cf.* Gen. xix. 1ff; Jud. xix. 15-21).

38-40. These three verses are clearly out of place in their present position, but critics are not agreed as to their original place. They have been placed after 8 (Peters), after 12 (Hontheim), after 25 (Kennicott), after 32 (Duhm), after 34 (Gray). The metrical arrangement of the speech is in favour of their insertion here. Job is generous in the use of his wealth, and he acquires it without doing injustice to others.

38. The connection with 39 shows that the land's complaint would be due to the injustice done to the former owners, and to those now employed to till it. The *land* cries out because unjustly acquired, the *furrows* weep, because those who made them received no payment. (*Cf.* Deut. xxiv. 14-16; James v. 4).

39. The first part refers to the payment of his labourers, the second to the dispossession of the previous owners. Job is not a land-grabber like those described in Is. v. 8; Jer. xxii. 13; Mich. ii. 2.

40. As in verses 8, 10, 22, the punishment fits the crime. Let the land be accursed like the land of Cain (Gen. iv. 11-12). *Thistles* and *noxious weeds* are the vegetation of an uncultivated land (*cf.* Is. v. 9-10).

33-37. Finally, he is guilty of no secret sins; his defence is complete, and he can meet his judge with confidence.

33. Job's life is an open book; he has not lived the life of a recluse, whose actions may be hidden from the multitude. *As men do*. The Hebrew might also be translated 'like Adam'; but a reference to Adam is hardly likely in the mouth of Job,

and it is not clear if it would fit in with the context. The reference is rather to man's natural impulse to conceal his faults. He has nothing to hide; he is prepared to submit his actions to the scrutiny of any impartial judge (35a).

34. The reasons which might have induced Job to conceal his sins—fear of public opinion.

34b-35a. Job abruptly concludes his defence with a wish that there were one to hear and decide his case. (*Cf.* ix. 33).

35b-c. *My last word*, lit. 'my tau,' 'tau' being the final letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Compare our expression 'from A to Z' = from first to last. As the 'tau' in the primitive Hebrew alphabet had the form of a cross, it is often used to designate a mark in that form (Ezech. ix. 4, 6; Apoc. vii. 1ff). Hence many critics translate here 'behold my *mark*' i.e. my signature: Job affixes his signature to the scroll containing his defence. But we have no evidence of a document being authenticated in this way. *The scroll*, the document containing the statement of the accuser or the accused. *His adversary*. The Hebrew has 'my adversary,' but this cannot be right. Job's adversary (God) has not yet answered, His 'scroll' is not yet written. The context implies that the 'scroll' is that to which he has written the last word (35b), and which he would present with pride before his judge (36), viz. his own defence. We should therefore read the third person instead of the first.

36. If there were a judge to hear his case, Job would present it with confidence and pride. *On my shoulder*. It is not something to be hidden in shame, it is a badge of distinction, like a king's sceptre (Is. ix. 5). So far from wishing to hide his actions, he is prepared to proclaim them to the world at every step.

37. Here again 'it' refers to Job's statement in his own defence. As he approached the tribunal he would publish it abroad with pride, and present it like a prince. *At every step*, lit. 'the number of my steps.' For the adverbial use of the word 'number' *cf.* xv. 20; Eccles. ii. 3, 4, 17; vi. 12.

38-40. See above after verse 32.

40c. If these words are genuine, it would seem to follow that the speeches of Job in Chapters xli.-xlii. are not part of the original text. Some critics make use of the clause to cast doubts on the genuineness of all that follows (Volz), or at least of the Speeches of Elihu (Dillmann). Peters follows the Greek, Syr. and Aq. and connects with Chapter xxxii. But the repetition of the name of Job in xxxii. 1 is against this. The resemblance to Psalm lxxii. 20 and Jer. li. 64 rather indicates that the words were added by the scribe.



SECTION III  
SPEECHES OF ELIHU  
XXXII-XXXVII





## SPEECHES OF ELIHU (XXXII-XXXVII)

1. *General Character.* The new speaker stands out in sharp contrast to the three friends of Job. The latter are represented as old men, steeped in the traditional teaching of the wise, which has been derived ultimately from the primitive inhabitants of the land (xv. 10, 18-19). Elihu is a fiery youth, whose wisdom is the wisdom of genius, given to him as a special gift by his Creator (xxxii. 7-9). He undertakes the task of confuting Job in which his elders have failed.

Nevertheless, there is no essential difference between his point of view and that of the three elders. He feels that the silence of the latter might be taken as an admission that Job had proved his case (xxxii. 3) and therefore thinks it necessary to restate the whole position. He elaborates in his own fashion the fundamental doctrine of the absolute justice of God (xxxiii. 31-xxxiv). This is a matter which is beyond all question. It follows that if He has afflicted Job, the latter must have been guilty of acts which deserved such retribution (xxxv.).

On the problems of the suffering of the just and the prosperity of the wicked he supplements and clarifies the teaching of the elders. With regard to the immunity of the wicked, the elders maintained that such immunity is but temporary; in due time God will intervene, and their ruin will be sudden and complete. Elihu suggests a further explanation: God is sometimes patient with the sinner, whether a nation or an individual, and gives him time for repentance. Should he repent, God will refrain from punishing him (xxxiv. 29-32). With regard to the suffering of the just, Elihu enunciates somewhat more explicitly the view expressed by Eliphaz in his opening speech (v. 1ff): such suffering is a special warning sent by God to one who has unwittingly violated the divine law. If he take advantage of the warning, he will be restored to happiness; if he refuse, he will be treated as an obstinate sinner, and suffer the sinner's fate (xxxvi. 1-20). But it is not for man to question the action of God in any particular case. His duty is to trust in God's justice and obey (xxxvii. 23-24).

2. *Plan of the Speeches.* According to the present text, there is a special formula of introduction in xxxii. 6, xxxiv. 1, xxxv. 1, and xxxvi. 1, so that there are four distinct speeches. But the subject-matter as well as the metrical structure indicate that a further division is to be made at xxxiii. 1 and xxxvi. 22 ; while xxxvii. 14-24 is a kind of peroration.<sup>1</sup> We have thus the following Sections, excluding the prose introduction :—

1. Introductory Speech, addressed to the friends and bystanders, explaining the reasons of his intervention, xxxii. 6-22.
2. Refutation of Job's complaint that God has refused to answer him. God warns the sinner by dreams and by suffering, xxxiii. 1-30.
3. Refutation of Job's statement that the just man is not rewarded, xxxiii. 31-xxxiv.
4. Refutation of Job's claim to innocence, xxxv.
5. God's purpose in permitting the just to suffer, xxxvi. 1-21.
6. The wonderful works of God, xxxvi. 22-xxxvii. 13.
7. Conclusion : God is unattainable, xxxvii. 14-24.

In the first part of the Speeches (Sections 2-4) Elihu cites specific statements made by Job, and refutes them ; in the second (Sections 5-7) he makes his positive contribution to the solution of the problem.

<sup>1</sup>It has been suggested above (Introduction to Chapter xxviii.) that Chapter xxviii. may have been the continuation of Elihu's Speech, begun in xxxvii. 14-24.

## I. ELIHU'S FIRST SPEECH.

Section a) xxxii. 6-22.

*Argument.* Elihu explains the reasons for his intervention in the debate. The first section (6-14) is addressed to the three friends of Job, the second (15-22) to the bystanders.

a) *Address to the friends.* He has remained silent hitherto, because their age entitled them to precedence (6-7); but true wisdom comes not with years, but by the grace of God (8-10). He has given them free scope, but they have failed to confute Job (11-12); but let them not despair, his own superior wisdom is yet to be tried (13-14).

b) *Address to the bystanders.* He repeats that he has intervened only when his elders had given up the contest (15-17); but while they have been reduced to silence, he himself is 'full of words' and eager to express them (18-20). He will speak with complete impartiality, unswayed by his natural veneration for the aged (21-22).

xxxii. 1 These three men ceased to answer Job, because he was just in their eyes. 2 And Elihu, son of Barachel the Buzite, of the clan of Ram, was hot with anger. With Job was he hot with anger, because he thought himself rather than God to be in the right; 3 and with his three friends was he hot with anger, because they had found no answer, and had condemned God. 4 Now Elihu had waited while they were speaking with Job, because they were older in days than he; 5 but when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouths of the three men, he was hot with anger.

6 And Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said :

*Strophic arrangement : 3 : 3 : 3.*

I am young in days,  
 And ye are aged,  
 Therefore I held back, and was afraid  
 To declare my knowledge to you ;  
 7 I said : Days should speak,  
 And multitude of years make known wisdom !

- 8 But indeed, it is a spirit in man,  
And the breath of the Most High that giveth them  
insight.
- 9 It is not the aged that are wise,  
Nor the old that discern aright,
- 10 Therefore I say : Hearken to me,  
I also will declare my knowledge !
- 11 Behold, I have waited for your words,  
I listened to your reasonings ;  
While ye searched out words,
- 12 I was attentive unto you ;  
And behold, there was none to confute Job,  
None among you to answer his statements.
- 13 Beware lest ye say : “ We have found wisdom !  
God shall answer him, and not man ! ”
- [xxxiii. 4 The spirit of God hath made me,  
And the breath of the Almighty hath given  
me life,]
- 14 He hath not addressed words to me,  
Nor will I answer him with your sayings.
- 15 They are dismayed, they answer no more,  
Words have failed them ;
- 16 And I have waited until they spoke not,  
Until they ceased, and answered no more ;
- 17 I also will answer my part,  
I also will declare my knowledge.
- 18 Behold, I am full of words,  
The spirit in my belly constraineth me ;
- 19 For my belly is like wine that hath no vent,  
Like new wineskins it is ready to burst ;
- 20 I will speak, that I may find relief,  
I will open my lips and answer.

- [xxxiii. 3 My heart shall reveal words of knowledge,  
 My lips shall speak sincerely ;]  
 21 I will not be partial to any man,  
 Nor will I give flattering titles to any man  
 22 For I cannot give flattering titles,  
 My Maker would soon take me away.

CRITICAL NOTES.

xxxii. 1. 1. בְּעִינֵיהֶם (G. Sym. Syr.). M T בְּעִינָיו. 3. 1.  
 הָאֱלֹהִים (1M.S). M T אֵיּוֹב. 4. 1. בְּרִבְרָם. M T בְּדִבְרֵיהֶם  
 transp. ante אֶת-אֵיּוֹב (*cf.* G.).

## COMMENTARY.

xxxii. 1-5. Prose Introduction. The situation appears to Elihu intolerable. Job has contended that he is in the right, and that God is wrong, and by their silence the three friends appear to acquiesce in that judgment.

1. *In their eyes.* This is the reading of Greek and Syr. The Heb. has 'in his eyes.' But Job was just 'in his own eyes' from the very beginning, and so that cannot have been the reason of their silence. Besides, the reason of Elihu's anger is that they 'found no answer, and condemned God' (3). Job's final speech convinced them of his innocence.

2-3. Elihu's anger against Job and his three friends. *Elihu.* The name Elihu (My God is he) is found in 1 Sam. i. 1; 1 Chr. xii. 21; xxvii. 18. The name Barachel does not occur elsewhere, but the equivalent Barachiah occurs often. *Buzite.* In Jer. xxv. 23, Buz is associated with Dedan and Teman; so Elihu belonged to a tribe whose territory bordered on that of Job and the three friends. According to Budde, the names of the father and grandfather and clan of Elihu are given because he is described as a very young man, and therefore not known like the three ancients who had already spoken. *Hot with anger.* This is explained in the following verses as directed both against Job and against the friends. *Condemned God.* The Hebrew has 'condemned Job.' This is one of the 'corrections of the scribes' to avoid contact between the Divine Name and the word 'condemn.' By their silence, they admit that Job was right and God wrong.

4. Elihu has remained silent hitherto through respect for his elders.

5. But he is compelled to speak in defence of God's honour.

The prolixity of this introduction is evident, and occasions doubts as to whether the text is free from corruption. Budde argues that the whole of verses 2-5 is a later addition. He points out that the genealogy of Elihu is repeated in 6; that the designation 'the three friends' in 5 differs from 'these three men' in verse 1; the anger of Elihu is mentioned no less than four times. The omission of 2-3 at least would be a decided improvement.

6. The introductory formula resembles that of the speeches of the three friends, except that the name of Elihu's father is given (*cf.* v. 2 above). *I said*, i.e. in my heart = I thought. Elihu allowed old age to take precedence of youth.

8-10. But genius, the gift of God, can supply the defect of years.

8. *Spirit . . . breath.* The reference is to the 'breath of life' breathed into man's body by the Creator and resumed at his death (xxxiv. 14-15). According to Elihu, it is the source of

intelligence as well as life. Wisdom, like life itself, is the gift of God.

9. This wisdom Elihu claims to possess.

11-12. He has waited patiently while they spoke, but they have failed to confute Job.

13-14. But let them not give up in despair, there is one man who can confute him.

13. *We have found wisdom*, i.e. it is a hopeless task ; none but God Himself can vanquish Job. But there is no need for divine intervention. Elihu, too, is a creature, yet he is equal to the task. Verse 4 of the next chapter forms the necessary link between 13 and 14 (see below).

14. He has to deal with me, and I shall not use the arguments which failed in their purpose in your case. Instead of the first clause Dhorme reads 'I will not set forth such words as these,' which is partly supported by Greek and Syr. 'These' would then refer to v. 13.

15-17. Elihu now turns from the three friends to the bystanders. Cf. xxxv. 9ff, where the reverse process takes place.

18-20. He can speak with full knowledge of the subject ; and his strong convictions compel him to speak.

18. This verse contrasts with 15—words have failed them, but 'I am full of words.'

*The spirit.* This is 'the spirit in man' (8), or the divine influence which endows man with intelligence. *New wine-skins* are soft and pliable and distend owing to the formation of gas as the new wine ferments.

21-22. He proposes to speak with complete impartiality.

xxxiii. 3. This verse forms an appropriate introduction to this strophe, whereas at present it interrupts the context. *Shall reveal.* The Hebrew reads : 'Uprightness of heart (are) my words, and the knowledge of my lips they speak sincerely.' This forms a very awkward sentence, but by a slight change of pointing we get 'shall reveal' for 'uprightness,' and if we attach 'knowledge' to the second part of the verse we get the normal structure. The meaning is clear : his heart will conceive wise thoughts, and his language will express these thoughts exactly.

21. Job has accused the three friends of partiality (xiii. 8-11) ; he will not be able to make the same charge against Elihu. He will not permit the natural respect which he owes to his elders divert him from the line of strict justice.

22. To do so would be to merit God's displeasure. *For I know not.* We might, by a slight change of pointing, read 'for if I knew how to give, etc.', which would give better connection with 22b.

## 2. ELIHU'S FIRST SPEECH. (Section b) xxxiii. 1-30.

*Argument.* The first two strophes are introductory. He begins by assuring Job that he is a mere man like himself, so that if he has anything to say in reply, he cannot plead that he is deterred by the majesty of his opponent (1-7). Then he summarises Job's protestation of innocence, and replies briefly that Job's mere assertion is no proof against God (8-12).

In the third strophe, he begins his systematic refutation of Job's statements, and the remainder of this speech deals with Job's complaint that God refuses to answer him. Elihu's reply is that God has His own ways of communicating His will to men: first, by dreams, in which He conveys a warning to repentance, and so saves men from suffering and calamity (13-17); secondly, by means of sickness, which may be the means of saving them from the death which they deserve for their sins (18-22). For the angel will present man's repentance before God, and he will be cured of his disease (23-25). Then he will be restored to the friendship of God, and in return will proclaim to men his gratitude to God for His mercy (26-29).

*Strophic arrangement:* 5 : 5 : 5.

- 1 But hear now my speech, O Job,  
And give ear to all my words ;
- 2 Lo, when I have opened my mouth,  
When my tongue in my palate hath spoken,
- 5 If thou canst, answer me,  
Prepare, take thy stand before me ;
- 6 Behold, I like thyself am God's,  
I too was nipped off from clay ;
- 7 Behold, my terror shall not dismay thee,  
And my pressure shall not be heavy upon thee.
- 8 Now thou hast said in my hearing,  
And the sound of thy words I heard :
- 9 " I am pure, without transgression,  
I am clean, and free from iniquity ;
- 10 Lo, He findeth pretexts against me,  
And reckoneth me as His foe ;
- 11 He hath put my feet in the stocks,  
He marketh all my paths."
- 12 Lo, by these thou art not justified, I answer thee,  
Because God is greater than man.



- 13 Wherefore hast thou complained against him :  
That " all his words he leaveth unanswered " ?
- 14 For in one way doth God speak,  
And in a second way, though one perceiveth Him  
not :
- 15 By a dream, a vision of the night,  
When deep sleep falleth upon men,  
As they slumber upon the bed ;
- 16 Then He openeth the ear of men,  
And by warnings terrifieth them ;
- 17 To avert a calamity from his handiwork,  
And to save his back from wounding.
- 18 He withholdeth his soul from the pit,  
And his life from passing to the grave ;
- 19 And he is reprov'd with pains upon his bed,  
And the trembling of his bones is unceasing ;
- 20 And his life loatheth bread,  
And his soul dainty food ;
- 21 His flesh is consumed from sight,  
And his bones, which were invisible, are laid bare ;
- 22 And his soul draweth nigh to the pit,  
And his life to the dead.
- 23 Should there be by him an angel,  
An interpreter, one of a thousand,  
To declare to a man his duty,
- 24 And to be gracious to him and say :  
" Deliver him from going down to the pit,  
I have found a ransom,
- [30 To turn back his soul from the pit,  
That he be enlightened with the light of life,"]
- 25 Then his flesh shall become sleek as in youth,  
And he shall return to the days of his prime.
- 26 He shall pray to God, and He will answer him,  
And he shall see His face with rejoicing ;

- And He shall restore to man his justice,  
 27 And he shall sing to men and say :  
 " I sinned, and perverted the right,  
 And was not requited ;  
 28 He delivered my soul from passing to the pit,  
 My soul looketh upon the light."  
 29 Lo, all these things doth God,  
 Twice, thrice with men.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xxxiii. 3. Transp. ante xxxii. 21. 3a. 1. יִשָּׁר (✓ שָׁר cf. Syr. = affirm ; Arab. = reveal a secret.) MT יִשָּׁר. 1. אֶמְרֵי־דַעַת (cf. Prov. xix. 27). MT אֶמְרֵי וְדַעַת. 4. transp. ante xxxii. 14. 8b. 1. מְלִיךְ (G. Syr. Vulg.). MT מֶלֶךְ. 10a. 1. תּוֹאֲנוֹת (Syr.). MT תְּנוּאוֹת. 14b. 1. וְלֹא (cf. G.). MT לֹא. 16b. 1. וּבְמִסְרָם. MT וּבְמִסְרָם. 1. יַחֲתֵם (G. Syr. Aq.). MT יַחֲתֵם. 17a. 1. אֶדָּם מַעֲשֶׂה. MT אֶדָּם מַעֲשֶׂה. 17b. 1. מִגִּבֹּר (G.). MT מִגִּבֹּר. 1. וְגִוָּה (cf. xx. 25a). MT וְגִוָּה. 22b. 1. לְמוֹתִים. MT לְמַמְתִּים. 24a. 1. פָּרְעָהּ (MSS.). MT פָּרְעָהּ. 25a. 1. יִטְפֹּשׁ. MT יִטְפֹּשׁ (ר for י). 30. transp. ante 25.

## COMMENTARY.

1-7. Introduction. Invitation to Job to hear his argument, and then reply if he is able. He cannot excuse himself on the ground that it is an unequal contest.

2. The translation 'I am about to open my mouth' is misleading, and not justified on grammatical grounds. The tenses (perfect) indicate that this verse must be taken as a temporal clause, the principal clause being in verse 5: When I have spoken, answer if thou canst! This in itself is sufficient proof that verses 3-4 are out of place. Verse 3, in which he undertakes to speak with absolute sincerity, should probably go with xxxii, 21-22 (see above); while verse 4 fits in well with xxxii, 13-14. Dhorme places verse 4 with verse 6, where it is equally suitable, as there as well as in xxxii, 13-14 there is a contrast between the divine and the human. Only metrical considerations turn the scale in favour of the latter context.

5. He has been able to answer the others, let him answer Elihu if he can! *Prepare*, lit. 'set in order' i.e. thy case (cf. xxxii, 14).

6. Job complained that in God's presence he would feel so overawed by God's majesty, that he would be unable to plead on his own behalf (ix. 34; xiii. 21f). Elihu, his present opponent, is a man like himself. *Nipped off*. The potter first separates a portion of clay from the mass, and then proceeds to mould it (cf. x. 9; xxxi. 15; Gen. ii. 7; Eccus. xxxiii. 39).

7. A direct allusion to Job's words in ix. 34, xiii. 21. *Pressure*. Greek has 'my hand.' But the rare Heb. word 'pressure' has Biblical (Pr. xvi. 26) as well as extra-Biblical evidence (Syr. Assyri.) in its favour.

8-12. Job's claim summarised: he suffers though he is innocent; God is hostile towards him and persecutes him. But this mere assertion is not sufficient to justify him as against God.

8. Here as in 13b and again in xxxiv. 5ff, xxxv. 2-4, Elihu quotes or summarises certain objectionable statements made by Job, which he then proceeds to refute.

9. Job's undeserved suffering. The words are not an exact quotation. They sum up what Job has asserted in passages such as x. 7; xvi. 17; xxiii. 10f; xxvii. 5f; xxxi.

10. God is hostile towards him. The second clause is a quotation of xiii. 24; xix. 11; cf. ix. 18; xiii. 36; xxx. 21.

11. A quotation of xiii. 27; cf. xiv. 16; xviii. 7.

12. These statements in themselves are not sufficient to justify Job. It is necessary to hear God's side of the case. Now, as Sophar has stated in a similar context (xi. 5-6), God's knowledge of man's nature is more searching and comprehensive than man's own. Hence God's testimony must outweigh Job's. But has God spoken? Elihu answers in the affirmative. Not indeed that God speaks as man speaks to man; He has His

own methods of communicating with men; and these Elihu now describes.

13-17. God speaks to man by dreams. By these he warns a man to turn from his evil ways, and so avoid calamity and suffering.

13. This verse summarises Job's complaint in xix. 7: 'Lo, I cry out "violence," but am not answered.' (Cf. xxx. 20). As in 9-11 above, the quotation is not exact. *All his words*. As Elihu turns from the special case of Job to the dealings of God with men in general, he generalises the quotation, making 'his words' refer back to 'man' (12). The reading of Syr. 'my words' (cf. Vulg.) follows xix. 7, xxx. 20 more closely, and may be original.

14. Although the statement is a general one, the implication is that God has already spoken to Job also in this manner (cf. vii. 14: 'then thou scarest me with *dreams*.') *In one way . . . in a second way*. The 'second way' is described in the next strophe (18ff). *One perceiveth Him not*. God can communicate with man without assuming visible form.

15. Elihu alludes here to the revelation received by Eliphaz (iv. 13); the second line is an exact quotation of iv. 13b, and is regarded by some critics as a gloss. For revelation by dreams see Gen. xx. 3; xxviii. 11ff; xxxi. 11; xli. 25; Num. xii. 6.

16. *Openeth the ear*, instructeth, maketh revelation to, cf. Is. 1, 5; 1 Sam. ix. 15. *By warning terrifieth them*. Hebrew has 'sealeth their instruction'; the warning being conceived as a letter which bears the seal of the sender. The Greek suggests a different pointing of the consonants (see translation above). There is question here only of one class of revelation—a warning to repentance, because there is a veiled reference to Job's own case.

17. The text is probably corrupt. In 17a Hebrew reads: 'to turn away man, His work.' The Versions insert the preposition 'from' before 'his work,' and this reading is widely accepted. The meaning in that case is: God warns man to desist from his present course of action. The second part is much more difficult. Hebrew: 'and pride from man He covereth.' The Greek represents a text which differs by a single letter, and gives just the sense required: 'and that he may protect his body from wounding.' To make the first clause a perfect parallel to this, we have but to make a slight change in the division of the letters. Thus the whole verse gives the purpose of God's warning—to save a man from suffering. In the next strophe he describes how God sends a man suffering to save him from death. This parallelism confirms the emendations adopted above.

18-22. God's second way of warning the sinner. He refrains from inflicting the penalty of death, and as a warning afflicts the sinner with a grievous sickness, involving continuous pain, loss of appetite, emaciation, and danger of death.

18. Here there is question of another type of sinner, one who deserves not only suffering, but death as the penalty of his sin (*cf.* Ps. cvii. 17-18). This verse corresponds to verse 17 in the preceding strophe. *To the grave.* The Hebrew word usually means 'a weapon' of some kind, probably a javelin (xx. 25; Neh. iv. 11; 2 Chr. xxiii. 10). But, as Dhorme has shown (*JPOS*, 1920, p. 45), the word has likewise the meaning 'trench,' 'canal' (*cf.* Joel, ii. 8; Cant. iv. 12; Is. viii. 6; Neh. iii. 15). In verse 28 the expression 'pass to the *grave*' is replaced by 'pass to the *pit*,' which proves that the two words are synonymous. Like the parallel word 'pit,' the word originally referred to the grave, but later became a synonym of Sheol.

19. *And the trembling of his bones.* Taking the words in their usual sense, the Hebrew should be translated: 'And the *multitude* of his bones is perpetual,' (*Qeri*) or 'the *strife* of his bones is perpetual' (*Ketib*). The former is followed by Theod. and Vulg.; but as the predicate 'perpetual' is unsuitable, Theod. translated 'became numb or stiff' (*cf.* Vulg. *emarcescere fecit*). This, however, is only a free translation. The *Ketib* is generally accepted. Yet it is not easy to see what is meant by 'the strife of his bones.' Peters suggests that for 'perpetual' we should read a word for 'oven'—i.e. burn with fever. Dhorme is probably right in holding that the word translated 'strife' is really a rare word meaning 'trembling' (*cf.* Assy. *rābu*, to tremble). This suits the context both here and in iv. 14 (*cf.* Jer. xxiii. 9).

20. *Cf.* 'Their soul abhorreth all manner of food' (Ps. cvii. 18). *His life.* 'Life' is a synonym of 'soul.' Here both are practically equivalent to the personal pronoun. He has a distaste not only for ordinary fare, but even for choice dainties.

21. *Cf.* Job's description of his own state in xix. 20. The first clause corresponds to 'in my skin my flesh rotteth away,' and the second to 'and my bones protrude in sharp points.' There is therefore no need to make the slightest change in the text. *Are laid bare.* In Is. xiii. 2 we find the noun derived from this verb meaning 'a bare hill'; here it describes the bones stripped of flesh.

22. *Cf.* Ps. cvii. 18b: 'and they draw near to the gates of death.' *To the dead.* The Hebrew has 'to the killers,' i.e. the angels of death. But the 'angels of death' are associated with pestilence (2 Sam. xxiv. 16-17; 2 Kings xix. 35; Ps. lxxviii. 49), which is not the case here. Most critics assume a corruption of the text. The best emendation is either 'to the dead,' or 'to the place of the dead.' The former requires only a change of vowel-points.

23-25. If an angel should intervene to induce the sick man to repent, and to present to God his petition for pardon, then his sickness will disappear.

23a-b. We have here the same conception of God's dealings with men which underlies the story of the Prologue. The angels are the intermediaries between God and man, warning man of

his duty, and giving God an account of man's conduct. *An interpreter*, like a prophet (Is. xliii. 27), a representative of God. *One of a thousand*, one of the myriads who fill this role of intermediary. (Cf. i. 6).

23c-24a. The second part of the angel's function is to give an account of man's conduct before the throne of God (i. 6).

24b-c. The speaker is the angel of 23a, interceding for the sick man who has now repented. *A ransom*. The 'ransom' which the angel has received on God's behalf is the man's repentance.

30. This verse, which is certainly out of place in its present position, should probably be inserted here. *The light of life* is opposed to the gloom of Sheol (cf. x. 22).

25. Then the sick man is restored to health. The emaciation disappears, and he becomes plump and sleek as in youth. *Shall become sleek*. The Hebrew word is peculiar, and does not occur elsewhere. The first letter is probably the result of corruption (see critical note). *As in youth*. The Hebrew idiom has the comparative 'sleeker than youth' (cf. 'my cry is louder than a lion's roaring,' where we should say 'as loud as' (Ps. xxxviii. 9).

26-29. His subsequent happiness and gratitude. He is restored to the friendship of God, and in a song of praise proclaims God's goodness in delivering him from death.

26a-b. The normal relations with God are restored: he prays, his prayers are answered, and he returns thanks. *See his face* i.e. to worship at His sanctuary, and offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving (cf. Ex. xxiii. 15; xxxii. 20; Is. i. 22; Ps. xlii. 3; cf. xx. 27: 'thou shalt pay thy vows')

26c-27a. The restoration of health is the outward sign that he is no longer a sinner, his repentance has been accepted, and God has restored his state of justice. (Cf. v. 17ff, viii. 6, 'and restore the abode of thy justice.') *He shall sing to men*. The sacrifice of thanksgiving was accompanied by songs of praise. The singer praised God for His mercy, and proclaimed to men the favour he had received (cf. Ps. xxii. 26; xxxv. 18; xl. 11 etc.).

27b-c. This and the next verse are a summary of the song of praise. *Was not requited*. Lit. 'it was not equal to me.' Some critics by a change of pointing make the verb active: 'he did not requite me.'

28. Cf. 18, 24. *Passing to the pit*, cf. 'passing to the grave' (18). *The light*, i.e. the light of life, cf. 30.

29. God frequently intervenes to warn men in either of these two ways. *Twice, thrice*, i.e. again and again. This verse is clearly the conclusion of the strophe. In 'all these things' it includes not only the sickness of 18ff, but also the dreams of 15-17. Verse 30, however, brings us back to the second theme—restoration of a sick man to health. It belongs to an earlier stage of the poem, and fits in admirably after verse 24.

## 3. ELIHU'S SECOND SPEECH, xxxiii. 31-xxxiv.

*Argument.* This Speech (addressed to both Job and the three friends, xxxiii. 31-xxxiv. 4) is a defence of the *justice of God*.

Job has claimed, not only that he himself has been wronged, but that, in general, virtue is not rewarded (5-10b). To this Elihu replies that God is essentially just, for three reasons: a) being the Creator of all men, He has equal care for all, and is therefore an impartial Judge (10c-15); b) being omnipotent, He is not swayed by the fear of the mighty (16-20); c) being omniscient, His judgment is infallible (21-26).

He then deals with the difficulty: Why are the wicked sometimes spared? His reply is that God is merciful to the sinner who turns from his evil ways and repents (27-32). What then is to be said of Job's language regarding God's action? Is it to be excused on the ground that he spoke without reflection? No, his language is impious, like that of 'men of iniquity,' as we shall presently see (33-37).

*Strophic arrangement* : 6 : 6 : 6.

[xxxiv. 1 And Elihu answered and said :]

- xxxiii. 31 Attend, O Job, hearken to me,  
                   Hold thy peace, and I will speak ;  
   32 If thou hast aught to say, answer me,  
                   Speak, for I desire to justify thee ;  
   33 If thou hast not, hearken thou to me,  
                   Hold thy peace, and I will teach thee  
                                 wisdom ;
- xxxiv. 2 Hear my words, ye wise men,  
                   And ye that have knowledge, give ear to  
                                 me ;  
   3 For the ear trieth words,  
                   As the palate tasteth food ;  
   4 Let us choose for ourselves that which is right,  
                   Let us know among ourselves that which is  
                                 good.
- 5 Now Job hath said : " I am just,  
                   And God hath taken away my right,  
   6 Against me my judge is cruel,  
                   Sore is my wound, though I have not transgressed."

- 7 Who is the man like Job,  
    Who drinketh in mockery like water ?  
8 And goeth in company with workers of iniquity,  
    And walketh with wicked men ?  
9 For he saith : " It availeth a man nothing,  
    That he take delight in God."  
10 Therefore, ye men of understanding,  
    Hearken to me . . . . .
- Far is wickedness from God,  
    And injustice from the Almighty !  
11 According to a man's work doth He requite him,  
    And according to a man's way doth He reward him.  
12 Yea, of a surety, God doth not do wrong,  
    And the Almighty doth not pervert judgment ;  
13 Who entrusted the earth unto His care ?  
    And who put the whole world in His charge ?  
14 Should He withdraw unto Him His spirit,  
    And gather unto Him His breath,  
15 All flesh alike would perish,  
    And man return to dust.
- 16 If thou hast understanding, hear this,  
    And give ear to the sound of my words :  
17 Doth one that hateth right govern ?  
    And dost thou condemn Him that judgeth the  
        mighty ?  
18 Who saith to a king : Base one !  
    To nobles : Wicked one !  
19 Who showeth no partiality to princes,  
    Nor favoureth the rich more than the poor ;  
    Because they are all the work of His hands,  
20 In a moment they die, even at midnight,  
    He smiteth the rich, and they pass away,  
    And He removeth the mighty, and not by violence.
- 21 Because His eyes are upon man's ways,  
    And all his steps He beholdeth,



- 22 There is no darkness nor death-shade,  
Where the doers of evil may hide themselves,  
[25 Therefore He perceiveth their deeds,  
He overthroweth them by night, and they are  
crushed.]
- 23 Because He doth not appoint a time for men,  
To come unto God to judgment,  
24 He breaketh the mighty without inquisition,  
And setteth others in their stead,  
26 [Therefore] hath He smitten the wicked,  
He hath stricken them in the place of beholders.
- 27 As for them that “ turned away from His service,  
And regarded not all His ways,  
28 Making the cry of the poor to come to Him,  
So that He heard the cry of the needy,  
29 And He remained quiet, and who condemneth ?  
And He hideth His face, and who beholdeth  
Him ?—”
- With a nation, or with a man he is compassionate,  
30 Delivering a miscreant from the snares of affliction,  
31 Because he said to God :  
“ I was beguiled, I was not acting corruptly,  
32 Beside that which I see, do Thou teach me,  
If I have done iniquity, I will do so no more.”
- 33 Is it by thy will that He requiteth it ?  
If thou reject [His decision, must He smite ?]  
Since thou must choose, and not I,  
Then speak what thou knowest !
- 34 Men of intelligence may say to me,  
And the wise men that hear me :  
35 “ Job speaketh without knowledge,  
And his words are without understanding.”
- 36 But Job shall be tested to the end,  
Because of his answers like men of iniquity ;  
37 For he addeth transgression to his sin, ( )  
And multiplieth words against God.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xxxiv. 1. Transp. ante xxxiii. 31. 3b. 1. לֹאֲכֹל (G. Syr. Vulg.). M T לֹאֲכֹל. 6a. 1. עָלַי מִשְׁפָּטִי אֶכְזָר (cf. ix. 15; אֶכְזָר. cf. xxx. 21). M T עַל-מִשְׁפָּטִי אֶכְזָב. 6b. 1. מִחְצִי. M T חָצִי. 14a. 1. יָשִׁיב (G. Syr.). M T יָשִׁים. omit לָבוֹ. 17b. 1. וְאִם מַצְדִּיק. M T וְאִם-צָדִיק (מ haplogr.). 18a. 1. הָאֹמֵר (G. Syr. Vulg.). M T הָאֹמֵר. 20b. 1. יִגַּע שׁוֹעֵם. M T יִגַּעְשׁוּ עִם. 20c. 1. וַיִּסֵּר. M T וַיִּסִּירוּ. 23a. 1. מוֹעֵד. M T עוֹד. 25. transp. post 22. 26a. insert עַל-כֵּן from 27a. 1. חֶתֶת. M T חֶתֶת. 29c. 1. יָחַן (or יָחַם). M T יָחַד. 30a. 1. מֶלֶךְ. M T מִמֶּלֶךְ (מ dittogr.). 30b. 1. עָנִי. M T עִם. 31a. 1. אֱלֹהֵי אֹמֵר. M T אֵל הָאֹמֵר. 31b. 1. נִשְׁאַתִּי (Dhorme). M T נִשְׁאַתִּי. 36a. 1. אָף or אֲבָל (cf. G. Syr.). M T אָבִי. 36b. 1. בְּאִנְשֵׁי (G.). M T בְּאִנְשֵׁי. 37b. 1. בְּדִינוּ. M T בְּיָנֵינוּ. Transp. יִסְפֹּק post 33a.

## COMMENTARY.

xxxiii. 31-xxxiv. 4. Introductory strophe. An appeal to Job to hear his statement, and to the friends to decide between Job's claims and his refutation of them.

31. In our present text, these three verses are regarded as the conclusion of the previous speech. But if so, they are a mere repetition of the opening verses (1-5). The resemblance to the latter rather stamps them as the introduction to a new discourse (*cf.* xxxv. 1). The speech which follows is, for the most part, addressed to the friends; but in xxxiv. 16ff and 33 Job is addressed, so that the opening exhortation to Job is perfectly in place. The introductory formula in xxxiv. 1 should have been placed here.

32. Elihu emphasises that he is willing to hear anything Job has to say; if Job can prove his point, he will be satisfied (*cf.* xxxii. 21-22).

33. But if he has no reply, let him listen further, and he will hear the solution of the whole problem. Elihu is here referring to the two parts of his speech: xxxiii.-xxxv, in which he refutes Job, and xxxvi.-xxxvii, in which he puts forward his solution of the problem of suffering in general. In the second part he 'teaches wisdom,' i.e. he discusses the secrets of God's providence. (*Cf.* Ps. xlix. 4.)

xxxiv. 1. The introductory formula should probably have preceded xxxiii. 31 (see above).

2. Elihu now addresses the friends of Job. They are the 'wise,' the 'knowing ones' to whose judgment he now submits his views for consideration.

3. *Cf.* xii. 4. Elihu repeats, with slight change, a statement made by Job himself—that they can discern instinctively the true from the false statement.

4. They have first to examine the two positions (Job's and Elihu's), and having done so, they can decide which is good, i.e. which is right. The word *choose* has the meaning which it has in Aramaic, viz. 'to examine.'

5-10a. Job's statements. Job has made two statements which imply a denial of the justice of God, viz. a) a personal statement, that he is innocent, yet God makes him suffer the fate of the wicked; and b) a general statement, that there is no retribution. This latter statement puts Job into the category of the 'wicked.'

5. As in the preceding speech, Elihu takes up definite statements made by Job, though not necessarily in the same words. The second part of the verse cites xxvii. 2, the statement 'I am just' is rather a summary of all Job's speeches.

6. Not only has he been deprived of his due reward (5), but he has been made to suffer the fate of the wicked. *Is cruel.* Hebrew has 'I am a liar.' If the text is right, this must be taken to mean 'I am accounted a liar' (R.V.), which forces the

meaning of the verb. The Greek has 'he (God) lieth' (concerning my right He lieth), which is accepted by Dhorme. But Job's grievance is that God refuses to speak, or to judge him. Ehrlich's suggestion 'against my right *I suffer*' is very attractive. The context, however, seems to demand a mention of God as the author of his suffering. Now, the two verses (5-6) correspond in substance to xxx. 20-21, in which Job complains that not only does God refuse to do him justice, but actually afflicts him. This suggests the reading 'against me my adversary (or judge) is *cruel*,' which requires the change of a letter. *My wound*, lit. 'my arrow.' The writer may have used the word 'arrow' for the wound caused by the arrow (*cf.* vi. 4), but it is possible that a letter has dropped out, and that the original word was 'wound,' and not 'arrow' (Duhm, Dhorme).

7. Elihu now passes to something still more grievous, which he explains in verse 9. *Mockery*. The 'mockers' are not only wicked, but scoff at moral or religious truth (Ps. i. 1; Prov. i. 22). Eliphaz said that 'man drinks in *iniquity* like water' (xv. 16). Job is even worse than this.

8. By his 'mockery' he becomes the companion of the wicked (*cf.* xxii. 15-17, where Eliphaz speaks in much the same terms).

9. An example of Job's 'mockery'—a denial of the doctrine of retribution. Elihu is referring to passages like ix. 22-24; xxiv. 5-11, in which Job describes the sufferings of the innocent. If the innocent suffer, then it is of no profit 'to take delight in God.' *To take delight in*, or 'to be on terms of friendship with' (*cf.* Ps. l. 18).

10. The verse is not complete, and probably some words (if not a whole line) have dropped out.

10b-15. First argument: God is the creator of all alike. He is therefore impartial in His judgment.

10b-c. *Cf.* viii. 3. Sin or injustice is incompatible with the nature of God. Elihu begins by a statement of the doctrine (10b-c); then he draws two inferences: positive, He judges a man according to his deserts (11) and negative, he cannot pervert judgment (12). The actual proof follows in 13-14.

13. The proof. God rules the whole universe, and preserves the life of all things that live. The argument seems to be: in the case of men there are conflicting interests, and a man is sometimes unjust because of selfish motives. But with God such is not the case. The whole universe is His, and He has to render an account to none (*cf.* xxxvi. 23).

14. *Cf.* xii. 10. All men depend on Him for life. *Withdraw His spirit*. God created man by breathing into clay the breath of life (Gen. ii. 7; Is. xlii. 5; Ps. civ. 29), which He withdraws at death (Ps. civ. 29; Eccles. xii. 7). All are equally His creatures, and there is no reason why He should favour one more than another. The text is slightly defective. The word 'withdraw' was first corrupted to 'set,' and this led to the insertion of 'his heart.'

16-20. Second argument. His judgment is not swayed by fear of the mighty. How can Job accuse of injustice One who is superior to kings and princes? They, too, are his creatures, and if they sin, He smites them down suddenly.

16. He now turns from the three friends to address Job. (cf. xxxii. 31-32).

17. Job's language implies that the world is ruled by 'one that hateth right'; he accuses of injustice one who is essentially just. Although he does not actually quote Job's words, he represents what he regards as Job's point of view. This is refuted in the following verses. *Govern*, lit. 'bind up' (cf. *sanari potest*—Vulg.) *Judgeth the mighty*. Heb. has 'mighty just one.' As it stands, this composite expression refers to God. A slight change would give us 'Dost thou condemn One who dealeth justice to the mighty?', which gives a better connection with the following, and a better parallel to 'one that hateth' in 17a.

18. When they are guilty of a fault, He rebukes them, though they be kings or princes. *Base one*, The word (*Belial*) later became a name for the devil (2 Cor. vi. 15), but here the word is used in its original sense 'worthless,' 'wicked,' (cf. Joüon in *Biblica*, 1924, p. 179).

19. Before God the rich and the poor are equal.

19c-20. *They* here refers to the 'kings,' 'princes,' 'nobles' and 'rich' of 18-19. As they are all His creatures, He can suddenly withdraw their 'spirit,' and they die. (Cf. 17.)

20b-c. Sometimes they are smitten with a fatal disease, sometimes they die suddenly and mysteriously. The first part of the verse is corrupt. Hebrew reads: 'the people are shaken and pass away.' A different division of the consonants gives the sense required: 'he smiteth the rich, and they pass away,' which forms a good parallel to 20c. *He smiteth*, i.e. with a fatal illness or plague (i. 11; xix. 21). *Not by violence*, lit. 'not by hand,' i.e. mysteriously (Dan. ii. 34; Lam. iv. 6).

21-26. The third argument: God is omniscient. He sees all men's actions, even in the darkness; He does not need to investigate a man's guilt, and so strikes him down suddenly.

21. God sees all the actions of men. Cf. xiv. 16; xxiv. 23; xxxi. 4. Elihu implicitly refutes Job's contention that God is not aware of man's actions.

22. Even at night man's actions are not hidden. 'Even the darkness is not too dark for Thee' (Ps. cxxxix. 11f, cf. Jer. xxiii. 24; Ecclus. xxiii. 19f).

25. This verse supplies the 'therefore' which answers to 'because' of 23-24; it is because nothing is hidden from God, not even by the densest darkness, that he sees the ways of the wicked, and overthrows them even at night. *By night* refers back to 20a.

23. Among men a special time is appointed for the trial of a crime, and the circumstances are closely investigated. God

does not require either, and so can smite down the sinner without warning. The Hebrew is somewhat peculiar, but a slight change suffices to obtain the text translated above.

24. The particle 'because' goes with this clause also. *Without inquisition*, without the long process of inquiry and examination necessary in human trials. For verse 25 see above after v. 22.

26. This verse is corrupt in the Hebrew 'under wicked men he struck them, in the place of beholders.' The word 'under' has to be taken in the sense of 'among' or 'as,' a meaning which is very doubtful (in Ecclus. xxx. 25, usually cited in favour of this meaning, it means 'instead of'). The change of a letter gives us 'he smote the wicked, he struck them in the place of beholders.' The initial word of the verse 'therefore' has been inserted by mistake in the next verse. The whole verse bears the same relation to 23-24 that 25 bears to 21-22 ('because' . . . 'therefore'). *In the place of beholders*, i.e. publicly. Sometimes the wicked are carried off at midnight, sometimes in broad daylight, before the eyes of men.

27-32. But sometimes men sin, and oppress the poor, and yet God fails to intervene to punish the wicked and succour the oppressed. The explanation is that the miscreant has repented of his sin, and promised to change his ways.

27. In this strophe, Elihu considers the great difficulty which can be raised against the doctrine of God's justice: Why does He sometimes allow the sinner to go unpunished? Verses 27-29 (a quotation summarising passages like xxiv. 2ff) state the difficulty, the explanation follows in 29c-32. In the beginning of the verse we have the impossible combination of the relative particle followed by 'therefore.' One or the other is superfluous. Dhorme transfers the relative particle to 26; on the contrary, it is the particle 'therefore' that is to be transferred. The relative particle is used here to introduce a hypothetical case as in Lev. iv. 22; Deut. xi. 27; Jos. iv. 21. The verse recalls xxi. 13-14: 'They say to God: Depart from us! And we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.'

28. Cf. xxiv. 2ff; Ps. ix. 13; cxlv. 19.

29. Yet God does not intervene, either to punish the oppressor, or to succour the afflicted (29b). *Who condemneth?* The answer is, None. This part of the verse reproduces xxi. 30-31: 'Who doth requite him for what he hath done?' *He hideth His face*, i.e. in indifference. He fails to succour the oppressed; He is deaf to their cry, and turns away His face.

29c-30. Here begins Elihu's reply. Unfortunately, textual corruption has obscured the meaning. Lit. 'Against (or concerning) a nation or a man together, making to reign an impious man of them that ensnare the people.' Some emendation is necessary, and the most diverse interpretations have been given of the restored text, many of which have little relation to the context. The text translated above is the result of three slight changes. The meaning is that God in exceptional cases has mercy on a nation or an individual, and delivers the sinner from misfortune,

for the reason given in the following verse. *Snares of affliction*. Cf. 'held fast in the bonds of affliction' (xxxvi. 8, cf. 11). The same metaphor is used by Bildad in xviii. 10.

31. The reason for the sinner's immunity: he had sinned unwittingly, not deliberately, and he has repented. *I have been beguiled*. The Heb. has 'I have borne,' and the object (my guilt or my chastisement) must be supplied. Dhorme (cf. Ball) suggests 'I was beguiled' (a change of pointing only), and this is probably correct. The two verbs 'I was beguiled' and 'I was not corrupt' have reference to the two classes of sin: those committed through inadvertence, and those committed 'with a high hand' (Num. xv. 30). The sinner pleaded that his sin was due to inadvertence, not to deliberate rebellion against God.

32. The sinner's suffering has brought to his mind some of the faults which he has committed, but there may be others of which he is not aware. He is ready to repent of them all. *Beside that which*. The relative is omitted, as often in poetry.

33-37. Must God consult Job before pardoning the sinner? If Job refuse to pardon him, must God smite him down? This is what Job's language amounts to! You cannot excuse his language on the ground that he spoke without advertence; for if we examine it, we shall see that it is like the language of the 'impious.'

33a. Lit. 'Is it from with thee that He requiteth it, because thou hast rejected.' The meaning of the first clause is fairly clear: is God's requital of the sinner dependent on Job's consent? *At thy will*. The particles are used to express origin or authorship (cf. Ox. Lex. *ad voc.* 5.d.). The second clause 'because thou hast rejected' creates difficulty. The verb is never used absolutely; it is usually followed by the object (direct or indirect). Some critics (cf. Dhorme) assume that some words are missing. I suggest that the missing words are to be found in 37b. *His decision*, i.e. God's decision to pardon the sinner, as described in the previous strophe. If Job disagrees with this decision, must God act accordingly, and smite down the repentant sinner? By reading the masculine suffix instead of the neuter in the first clause, it is possible to obtain even close parallelism, the second clause forming the antithesis to the first: 'Is it at thy will that He maketh him whole? If thou reject His decision, must he smite?'

33b-c. Elihu forces Job into a dilemma: if he decides that the sinner deserves pardon, he gives away his case; if he decides that the sinner is not to be pardoned, he denies the mercy of God.

34. The *men of understanding* and the *wise men* are those to whom the whole speech is addressed, viz. Job's three friends and Job himself (xxxiii. 31-xxxiv. 4).

35. This verse may be interpreted in two ways: a) Those who have heard my argument will admit that Job's statements are erroneous; b) those who hear me excuse Job on the ground that he spoke without full reflection. The following verses favour

the second interpretation. Elihu proceeds to examine Job's language 'to the end' to show that he spoke like one of the wicked.' His answers were like those of 'men of wickedness,' not merely rash statements made under the stress of his sufferings.

36. Let us then examine his words, and we shall find that his answers are like those of 'men of iniquity.' This discussion begins in the next chapter.

37. By his impious talk Job adds transgression to his 'sin.' By the latter is meant the sins which led to his downfall. These, according to Elihu and the three friends, were due to negligence or inadvertence. His denial of the justice of God is of a more serious nature. Cf. xxxiv. 7-9.

The middle clause of the verse is difficult and obscure. The usual translation 'he clappeth hands among us' is open to serious objection. For the verb means 'to strike,' and it is used above (26) in this sense. In itself it does not mean 'to clap hands,' and the absence of the word 'hands' makes the accepted interpretation improbable. By a slight emendation we can read 'his decision' for 'between us,' and take the first letter as the preposition which is the usual complement to 'reject.' In this form the clause fills the lacuna in 33, and forms a parallel to 33a.



## ELIHU'S THIRD SPEECH, xxxv.

*Argument.* Elihu now proceeds to examine Job's 'impious' language, to which he referred at the close of his last speech (xxxiv. 36-37). He has actually accused God of acting unjustly towards him; for he claimed that, even if he had sinned, he could not have harmed God (2-4).

To this Elihu replies: It is true that man can neither benefit God by virtue, nor harm Him by sin (5-7). But this does not exculpate Job. For his actions can affect his fellow-men. The oppressed cried out for aid, but he neglected to succour them, through respect for the dignity of the oppressors (8-9, 12). Instead of being mindful of the gratitude he owed to God who created him and protected him, he assumed, like the impious, that He was unaware of the sufferings of the oppressed and of his negligence (10-11, 13). In fact, while he thought that God was indifferent to the affairs of men, he was silent and respectful towards Him; but now, when God has intervened to punish iniquity, and has made no exception in his favour, he is neither silent nor respectful (14-16).

*Strophic arrangement* : 3 : 3 : 3.

xxxv. 1 And Elihu answered and said :

2 Dost thou deem this to be right :

Thou hast said : ' I am justified before God ' ?

3 For thou sayest : ' What doth it matter to Thee ?

And what do I to Thee if I sin ? '

4 I will give thee the answer,

And thy friends with thee.

5 Look upon the heavens and see,

And regard the skies which are high above thee ;

6 If thou sin, in what canst thou harm Him ?

And if thy offences be many, what dost thou to Him ?

7 If thou be virtuous, what dost thou give Him ?

And what doth He receive at thy hand ?

8 A man like thyself doth thy wickedness affect,

And thy virtue a son of man ;

9 Because of many oppressions they cry out,

They complain because of the arm of the mighty ;

[12 There they cry, and he answereth not,

Because of the majesty of wicked men.]

- 10 And he said not : ' Where is God, my Maker,  
Who giveth succour in the night ?  
11 Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth,  
And maketh us wiser than the birds of the  
heavens ? '  
13 But ' Vanity ! God doth not hear,  
And the Almighty doth not behold it.'  
  
14 Nay, when he said : ' He doth not behold it,'  
He was silent before Him, and waited for Him ;  
15 But now, because His wrath is visiting iniquity,  
And He hath not held back his soul from calamity,  
16 Job with vanity openeth his mouth,  
And without knowledge multiplieth words.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

- xxxv. 2b. 1. צִדְקָתִי (G. Syr. Targ. Vulg.). MT צִדְקִי.  
3b. 1. אֶעֱלֶה בְּךָ אִם הִטָּאתִי (G.). MT מִחִטָּאתִי.  
12. transp. post 9. 14a. 1. אָמַר. MT תֹּאמַר. 1. יִשְׁוֹרְנוּ.  
(Vulg. Targ. cf. G.). MT תִּשְׁוֹרְנוּ. 14b. 1. וַיִּתְחַלֵּל. MT וַתִּשְׁוֹרְנוּ.  
MT וַיִּתְחַלֵּל. 15a. 1. אֵין. MT אֵין. 15b. 1. גִּרַע.  
MT יָדַע בְּפֶשַׁע מֵאֵד (cf. Syr.). MT יָדַע בְּפֶשַׁע מֵאֵד.

## COMMENTARY.

2-4. Job claims that because he has done no injury to God, He is not justified in chastising him.

2. *This* is the statement contained in 2b: Is Job entitled to claim that in an argument with God he will be found in the right? *I am justified*. This is the reading of all the Versions. The Hebrew (omitting one letter) has 'my justification': 'it is my justification before God.' In this case, the two clauses are identical in meaning, and 'this' refers to verse 3. *Before God*. The preposition is used in this sense in iv. 17 and xxxii. 2. The clause might be translated 'I am more just than God.'

3. This is Job's argument for his contention (2b): God has not been injured by my sin, therefore He has chastised me unjustly. The text is somewhat doubtful. In 3b, Hebrew reads: 'And what do I gain from my sin' (i.e. more than if I had sinned)? This is equivalent to xxxiv. 9: 'It availeth a man nothing that he take delight in God.' It is thus understood by Peters, who in consequence changes 'to Thee' into 'to me' in 3a. But if the theme is the absence of retribution, there is no connection with either verse 2 or with the rest of the poem. Hence the reading suggested by the Greek is preferable: 'What do I to Thee if I sin?' This forms the natural sequel to verse 2, and is presupposed by verses 5-7. Elihu is probably alluding to Job's statement in vii. 20: 'If I sinned, what could I do to Thee?' This is the 'impious language' to which he referred in xxxvi. 36. Cf. xxiv. 7-9.

4. *Thy friends*. The Greek has 'thy *three* friends,' which many critics regard as correct.

5-7. It is true that God abides beyond the reach of men. He can neither receive injury from man's sin, nor benefit from man's virtue.

5. Cf. xxii. 12. The underlying thought is that God is as far beyond man in majesty as the heavens from the earth (cf. xi. 2f; Is. lv. 9).

6-7. Elihu combines Job's statement in vii. 20 with that made by Eliphaz in xxii. 2-3.

8-9. 12. But Job's virtue or wickedness can affect his fellow-men. The oppressed cried out for redress, but Job did not succour them because of his respect for the wicked oppressors.

8. Compare Eliphaz's charge in xxii. 4ff: Job has been chastised, not for any offence against God, but for the injury done to the poor and oppressed by his negligence.

9. Elihu does not accuse Job of being himself an oppressor. He merely neglected to come to the aid of the oppressed. Job has already repudiated this charge in xxix. 17; xxx. 25; xxi. 38-40.

12. This verse forms the natural sequel to 8-9 (see below). *He answereth not.* The subject is not God (as usually understood) but Job. This is clear from the parallel passage in Eliphaz's speech (xxii. 4ff). *Because of the majesty of the wicked.* Critics generally take this clause with 12a, and regard 'and he answereth not' as a parenthesis: There they cry—and he answereth not—because of the pride of wicked men. But it is not the pride of the oppressors, but their cruelty that makes the afflicted cry out. The word means 'excellence or majesty' rather than 'pride' (cf. xxxvii. 4; xl. 10), and the clause gives the reason for Job's negligence, his fear of, or respect for the oppressors.

10-11, 13. The gratitude which he owed to God who created him and protected him in the past should have urged him to succour the needy; but, like the impious, he assumed that God was unaware of the suffering of the distressed, and therefore of his negligence.

10. Compare xxxi. 15, 18, where Job states that his kindness to the slave and the poor was inspired by gratitude to God as his creator and protector. *He said not.* Most critics (including Peake, Dhorme, and Peters) follow the Syriac and read the plural (*they said . . . our maker*), thus making the oppressed the subject. Elihu is thus credited with the curious doctrine that God refuses to succour the oppressed because their appeal proceeds from a purely selfish motive, and has no element of religion in it! But comparison with xxxi. 15, 18 makes it clear that the subject is the same as that of 'he answereth not,' namely Job (as in the Hebrew). *Who giveth succour.* The words are usually translated 'who giveth songs.' Most critics take this figuratively: in the very midst of distress (night) God gives relief (songs of joy). Cf. Ps. xlii. 9. But it is probable that the word is derived from a different root meaning 'protect' as in Ex. xv. 2; Is. xii. 2; Ps. cxviii. 14. This gives a closer parallel to 10a: God has created Job and protected him in the past, and his sense of gratitude should have prompted him to succour others in their need.

11. *More than the beasts etc.* The reference is to the place of man in the scheme of creation; he is endowed with intellectual gifts which place him above other animals. This dignity is shared by Job and the oppressed. The Greek has the singular suffix ('who maketh me') as in verse 10; but the Hebrew reading is to be preferred, for the contrast is between man (Job and the oppressed) and other animals. In verse 10, the singular is appropriate, because there the contrast is between Job and the oppressed.

13. Verse 12 is probably out of place: a) it interrupts the connection between 11 and 13; b) the plural verb indicates that the subject is the oppressed of verse 8. The verse should probably be placed after verse 9.

Verse 13, like 10-11, depends on 'he said' (10). Verses 10-11 tell us what Job *did not* say, verse 13 what he *did* say. He

adopted the language of the impious, that God does not hear the cries of the distressed. He is probably alluding to the statement of Eliphaz: 'Yet thou sayest: What doth God know?' (xxii. 17). *Vanity*. Some critics make this the object of 'hear': God refuses to hear the prayer of the wicked (the oppressed). But the next verse proves that here also Job is the speaker. The word is to be taken adverbially 'in vain': the cries of the distressed are futile, for God cannot hear.

14-16. In the past, when he thought that God was not aware of the sins of men, Job was silent and respectful towards Him; but now, when God has intervened to punish the guilty, and has made no exception in his favour, he is no longer silent or respectful.

14. The meaning of this verse is very obscure. Lit. 'Nay, when thou sayest thou beholdest it (or him) not, the cause is before him and thou shalt wait for him.' If the text is correct, this must be taken as a reference to Job's repeated declaration that he is ready to meet God in judgment. But it is difficult to see what connection this has with the theme enunciated in 2-4. The use of the second person is suspicious; for Job is spoken of in the third person in the preceding verses and again in the following. The confusion is probably due to the fact that, as in xxxii. 6-22, Elihu addresses Job and the bystanders (or the three friends), alternately. The change begins in verse 12 (or, perhaps, verse 10).

The Vulg., Targ., and probably the Greek have the third person in the second clause (he beholdeth), and as this is a quotation from verse 13b, this must be regarded as correct. Perles' suggestion for the final clause 'be silent before Him and wait for Him' (Ps. xxxvii. 7) leads in the right direction; but we should probably read the perfect and imperfect instead of the imperative. By reading the third person throughout the whole verse becomes intelligible. Elihu contrasts the attitude of Job in former times and now. Then he was negligent of his obligations towards the afflicted, but pious and respectful towards God; but now his attitude has changed.

15. But now, God has intervened to punish iniquity, and has made no exception in favour of Job himself. Here again the text is very difficult. The Hebrew may be translated: 'And now, because His anger is not visiting, and He regardeth not arrogance greatly.' Taking the verse as it stands, neither statement is true. In order to get sense, we have to insert 'thou sayest' like the Rev. Version (marg.) and Dhorme. Some emendation is required. The translation above follows the consonantal text, with three slight changes, two of which have support in the Syriac. *He hath not held back*. Cf. xviii. 4. Bildad ironically asked whether Job expected God to abrogate nature's laws for his sake. So Elihu here taunts Job with looking forward to God's judgment of the wicked, and now, when it has come, expecting an exception to be made in his own case.

## 5. ELIHU'S FOURTH SPEECH. Section a) xxxvi. 1-20.

*Argument.* Elihu has completed his refutation of Job. He now proceeds to carry into effect the second part of his programme, viz. to teach Job 'wisdom' (xxxiii. 33), to explain the secrets of divine providence. This is the theme of the present Speech, viz. to explain the *purpose* of God in afflicting the just in general and Job in particular.

Once again, he starts with the fundamental principle of the justice of God, both in regard to the good and in regard to the wicked (5-7). If He sometimes permits the just to suffer, it is to warn them to repent of some sin of negligence or inadvertence (8-10). If they repent, they are relieved of their suffering and restored to happiness; if they refuse, they perish (11-12). Thus the obstinate perish, the humble are saved (13-15).

Turning to Job's case, he suggests that he may have been seduced from his duty as judge by love of ease and the comforts of his table (16-17, 21). In future, he is to be scrupulously impartial in the administration of justice, and not be influenced by bribes, or the influence of the great, or family ties (18-20).

*Strophic arrangement* : 3 : 3 : 3.

xxxvi. 1 And again Elihu said :

2 Suffer me a little, and I will show thee,  
     For there are still words on God's behalf ;  
 3 I will proclaim my knowledge afar off,  
     And to my Maker I will give justification ;  
 4 For in truth my words are not falsehood,  
     One that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.

5 Lo, God rejecteth not the pure of heart,  
     Mighty in strength 6 He will not let the wicked  
     live ;  
     And He granteth their right to the afflicted,  
     And from the just withdraweth not His eyes ;  
 7 And with kings on the throne,  
     He maketh them reign for ever, and they are  
     exalted.

8 And if they be bound in fetters,  
     And held fast in the bonds of affliction,

9 Then He declareth to them their work,  
And their offence, that they have behaved proudly ;  
10 And He openeth their ear to instruction,  
And commandeth that they turn from iniquity.

11 If they hearken, they shall pass [from the mouth of  
distress,  
Freedom unrestrained shall be instead thereof ;]  
They shall live out their days in happiness,  
And their years in pleasures ;  
12 But if they will not hearken, they shall pass to the  
grave,  
And shall die for their folly.

13 And the impious in heart cherish anger,  
They cry not out when He bindeth them,  
14 Their soul dieth in youth,  
And their life in their prime ;  
15 But He saveth the humble by his affliction,  
And openeth his ears by distress.

16 Indeed, ( ) comfort hath seduced thee,  
And thy table full of fatness ;  
17 The judgment of the wicked thou didst not judge,  
And the right of the orphan was taken away ;  
[21 Take heed lest thou turn to iniquity,  
For because of this thou wert tried by affliction.]

18 Beware lest one seduce thee with wealth,  
And let not a great bribe lead thee astray,  
19 Arraign the rich as well as the penniless,  
And the weak and the mighty in strength ;  
20 Oppress not them that belong not to thee,  
That thy kinsmen may mount up in their place.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xxxvi. 5a. l. [לב] בְּבִיר. M T בְּבִיר וְ. 5b. transp. לֵב to 5a (after בְּבִיר). 6a. connect with 5b. 7b. omit l. 11a. l. וַיַּעֲבְרוּ. M T וַיַּעֲבְרוּ. 15b. l. אֲזָנוֹ (Vulg.). M T אֲזָנָם. 16. transp. תַּחֲתֶיהָ . . . מִפִּי צָר to 11a. (cf. Duhm). l. וְדִין רִשְׁעִים. M T הִסִּיתִךְ (נַחַת subject). 17a. l. וְדִין רִשְׁעִים מֵלֶאכֶת דִּין. M T וְדִין רִשְׁעִים מֵלֶאכֶת דִּין. 17b. l. יִתָּם מִסֵּר. M T יִתָּמְכוּ כִּי. 18a. l. חֲמָה. M T הֲמָה. 19a. l. הַיַּעֲרֹךְ שׁוֹעֵף לֹא בָצָר. M T הַיַּעֲרֹךְ שׁוֹעֵף לֹא בָצָר (or הַיַּעֲרֹךְ שׁוֹעֵף). 19b. l. וְכָל מֵאֲמַצִּי-כַח. M T וְכָל מֵאֲמַצִּי-כַח. 20a. l. בְּלִילָה. M T הַלִּילָה. 20b. l. עֲפִיף. M T עֲפִים. 21. transp. post 17. 21b. l. בַּחֲרֶת (Syr.) M T בַּחֲרֶת.



## COMMENTARY.

2-4. There is more to be said in defence of God's action. God's justice must be vindicated in regard to the upright in general, and Job in particular. And Elihu has the true solution of the problem.

2. The speech is addressed to Job throughout. *On God's behalf.* Cf. xiii. 7-8. The three friends likewise defended God's justice, but Job accused them of lying and special pleading.

3. *I will proclaim afar.* This, and not 'I will fetch my knowledge from afar' (Rev. Vers., Gray, Peake) is the correct rendering. (Cf. Esd. iii. 13; 2 Chr. xxvi. 15). Elihu means that he is now about to discuss the problem in general, and that his words are instructive to others besides Job.

4. *Perfect in knowledge.* Cf. xxxvii. 16, where the same expression is used of God. Elihu repeats the claim which he made in xxxiii. 3, that his knowledge is sound, and his words sincere.

5-7. The general principle which guides God's relations with men: the pure-hearted He will not reject, but the wicked He destroys; He rights the wrongs of the afflicted, His favour continually attends the just, so that they reign as kings.

5. The Hebrew of this verse is awkward: 'Lo, God is mighty, and rejecteth not, mighty in strength of heart.' The verb 'rejecteth' has no object, 'strength of heart' is an improbable expression, and the repetition of 'mighty' is suspicious. For the first half the Greek has 'God doth not reject the innocent,' which is very like viii. 20: 'Lo, God doth not reject the upright, nor doth he take the hand of evil-doers.' The parallelism shows that the first part of verse 6 is to be taken with verse 5. Very slight changes are sufficient to remove all the anomalies mentioned above. *Reject.* The parallelism shows that there is reference to irretrievable ruin. The following clauses discuss the exceptional cases when he allows the just man to be afflicted for a time. (Cf. iv. 7).

6b-7a. If they are afflicted, he succours them, and continues to show them favour until they reign as kings. *The afflicted.* The 'pure of heart' may have to endure affliction, but this is not 'rejection.' God eventually comes to their assistance, and delivers them from persecution or from distress. *Withdraweth not his eyes.* This apparently means the same as 'turn away or hide the face,' i.e. to show displeasure. God will continue to show favour to the just. Instead of 'his eyes,' the Greek has 'his judgment,' which is preferred by some critics.

7b-c. Cf. 1 Sam. ii. 8: 'He raiseth up the poor out of the dust . . . to make them sit with princes, and inherit a throne of glory.'

8-10. But if they are 'just,' why are they afflicted? To this question Elihu now replies. If they suffer, it is to warn them that they have sinned. Cf. iv. 17ff.

8. The subject is the 'pure of heart,' 'afflicted' and 'just' of verses 5-7. Elihu shares the view of the three friends of Job that even the just are not free from sin, although they may not be aware of it. *Fetters . . . cords of affliction*, cf. xviii. 8-10, where the same metaphor is used by Bildad (cf. xiii. 27; xxxiii. 11).

9. Suffering brings home to them their guilt (xxxiii. 23-24). Compare v. 17, xxii. 22: suffering is God's call to repentance.

10. According to xxxiii. 23, this warning is given by 'an interpreter' an angel, who then intercedes for the sinner with God.

11-12. If they heed the warning and repent, they are restored to happiness, if they refuse, they perish. Cf. xxii. 15-30.

11. In our text we have simply 'if they hearken and serve,' and there is no reference to deliverance from affliction. But the metre is defective. I have inserted here a clause from 16b, where is it probably out of place, which supplies the thought that is required here (see below). Elihu's doctrine is exactly the same as that taught by Eliphaz in his first and second speeches. Cf. iv. 17ff; xv. 14ff.

11b-c. Cf. xxii. 26-30, where Eliphaz promises such a life to Job, if he repents, and xxi. 13-15, where Job maintains that it is the wicked that live out their life in happiness.

12. *They shall pass to the grave*, cf. xxxiii. 18. Note the contrast between 'pass from the mouth of distress' and 'pass to the grave.' *For their folly*, lit. 'for their want of knowledge.' Cf. v. 3-4.

13-14. The issue depends upon the disposition of the individual. The proud refuse to repent, the humble repent.

13. The *impious of heart* are those who resent God's action. They *cherish anger*, i.e. against God (cf. v. 2-3; xv. 12-13).

14. These suffer the fate of the wicked, they die suddenly and prematurely (xv. 32; xxii. 16). *In their prime*, lit. 'like consecrated ones.' These were men whose lives were dedicated to the impure worship at the pagan temples, and who were proverbially short-lived (cf. Deut. xxiii. 18; 1 K. xiv. 24; xxii. 47; 2 K. xxiii. 7).

15. Affliction, accepted in the proper spirit, is a blessing rather than a curse. (Cf. v. 17). This verse summarises what Elihu has already said in his first speech xxxiii. 25-29.

16-20. The text of the rest of this section is so corrupt that many critics have given it up in despair (cf. Dhorme). The most widely divergent translations may be found in the works of commentators, many of which are difficult to reconcile with the general theme of the section. The translation given above is largely conjectural, but it follows closely the consonantal text, and, usually, the only changes are a different pointing, or a different division of the letters.

16-18. Application of the doctrine to Job. He has been seduced from his duty to his fellow-men by love of ease and luxury; the wicked were left unpunished, the orphan unredressed. Let him take warning, lest he become a sinner.

16. Hebrew has: 'And indeed He hath enticed thee from the mouth of distress, freedom without restraint instead thereof, and the comfort of thy table full of fatness.' This has been interpreted in various ways: a) As the application of verse 15: 'So, too He has enticed thee from the jaws of adversity' (Peake). b) As what would have happened if Job had been obedient: 'So would God have enticed thee from the mouth of distress' (Rev. Vers.). c) 'Thee hath freedom unrestrained led away from the mouth of distress' (Gray), the 'mouth of distress' being the cry for help addressed to God, i.e. Job's prosperity caused him to forget God. The difficulties of all three are obvious. With regard to a) and b), according to Elihu, God draws a man away from sin by means of distress, he does not draw a man away from distress, unless after repentance. With regard to c) 'mouth of distress' is a very improbable expression for a cry for help. Most modern critics have recourse to emendation. The text translated above (based on a suggestion by Duhm) eliminates the disturbing element 'from the mouth of distress, freedom unrestrained instead thereof,' which is transferred to verse 11, where it completes a verse. The remainder makes a complete verse, with 'comfort' subject to 'seduced thee,' and parallel to 'thy table full of fatness.' Elihu applies to Job the teaching of 1-15. Job has been enticed away from his obligations by his wealth and comfort. He has committed sins of negligence. Elihu has referred to this negligence already in xxxv. 9-12; he adds here the motive of Job's inaction—his love of ease and luxury.

17. Hebrew: 'Thou art full of the judgment of the wicked,  
Judgment and justice take hold!'

This is taken to mean that Job has been overtaken by the fate of the wicked. But the following verses show that there is still hope for Job, provided that he repent, and that he cannot yet be classed with the 'wicked.' It is remarkable that if we divide the Hebrew letters differently we get 'The judgment of the wicked thou didst not judge, and the right of the orphan . . .' The final verb has been corrupted, but it can be supplied with little difficulty. This gives an instance of the harm done by Job's neglect, and recalls xxxv. 9-12.

21. This verse forms the conclusion of the strophe. For it should precede 18-20, which expand and explain it. Job has been afflicted because of his negligence, lest he be drawn away to still greater sins. Examples of these sins are given in the next strophe. The purpose of suffering in general is given above in verse 10: 'he commandeth that they turn from iniquity.' Here we have practically the same words used with reference to Job. *Thou wert tried*. Heb. has 'thou hast tried,' but the passive (Syr.) is certainly correct.

18-20. Examples of the iniquities which Job is to guard against in future: taking bribes, favouring the strong against the weak, favouring a kinsman against a stranger.

18. *Take care.* The word is not the usual Hebrew word, but a rare synonym which is common in Syr., Assyrian and Arabic. *Wealth.* The parallelism with 'bribe' indicates that this is the meaning of the word here (cf. 1 K. xx. 10; Ecclus. xv. 18, where we have the corresponding verb). The law condemned the taking of bribes (Exod. xxiii. 8; Deut. x. 17; xvi. 19. Cf. Ps. xv. 5; Prov. xvii. 23).

19. This verse has given rise to an extraordinary variety of interpretation. The best that can be made of the Hebrew as it stands is 'Will thy riches avail, that are without stint, and all the forces of thy strength?' The meaning is supposed to be: no matter how great the bribe, it will be as nothing in comparison with the friendship of God which is lost. But the interpretation placed upon several of the words ('riches,' 'without stint') is extremely doubtful. There is again no lack of suggestion for the emendation of the text; but, as a rule, the readings suggested are no improvement. The translation given above is based on a different division of the letters. So reconstructed, the verse is a warning to Job against partiality towards the rich and powerful. In Exod. xxiii. 8, Deut. xvi. 19, this crime is associated with that of taking bribes. Cf. xxxiv. 18-19. *Arraign*,<sup>1</sup> i.e. summon before the tribunal (ix. 19; Jer. xlix. 19; 1, 44). *Penniless*, lit. 'no-gold' cf. 'no-strength,' 'no-wisdom' (xxvi. 2-3).

20. What has been said of verse 19 is also true of this verse. The Hebrew is nonsense, and the suggested emendations unsatisfactory. Gray calls it "perhaps the most unintelligible of all the verses." The only change made in the text to give the translation above is the substitution of 'them that belong not to thee' for 'night.' The term is used in xviii. 15, and in a slightly different form in xxxix. 16 (cf. Hab. i. 6, ii. 6, Gen. xv. 13; Jer. v. 19). This gives to the verse a meaning which brings it into line with 18 and 19. It condemns another practice which tended to the perversion of justice, partiality to one's kinsmen. *Oppress not.* The word is used in this sense in Ps. lvi. 2-3; lvii. 4; Ezech. xxxvi. 3; Amos ii. 7; viii. 4. *They that belong not to thee*, i.e. strangers, as opposed to his own kinsmen.

<sup>1</sup> The other reading suggested is 'Treat alike the rich and the penniless.'

## 6. ELIHU'S FOURTH SPEECH.

Section b) xxxvi. 22-xxxvii. 13.

*Argument.* The marvellous wisdom and power of God are manifest to men, and have been celebrated in song by the poets of all ages (22-25). They are manifest in the rain-clouds which are the agents of His bounty (26-28, 31), and in the thunder-clouds which are the agents of His wrath (29, 30-33); in the thunder and lightning (xxxvii. 1-4), and in the winter snow and rain-storms (5-8); in the wind which disperses the clouds, and in the storms of winter which bring cold and ice (21-22, 9-10). Both the rain-clouds and the thunder-clouds are under his guidance, and accomplish His will, both for good and ill (11-13).

The purpose of this description is clear from the opening verse : God can exalt, and He is a teacher. He is able to restore Job to happiness, and He is able to point out his faults, even though they may be unknown to Job himself.

*Strophic arrangement* : 4 : 4 : 4.

- 22 Lo, God exalteth by His might,  
And who is a teacher like Him ?
- 23 Who calleth Him to account for His action ?  
And who can say : Thou hast done wrong ?
- 24 Remember that thou extol His work,  
Whereof men have sung ;
- 25 All men have gazed thereon,  
Man beholdeth it from afar.
- 26 Lo, God is great, beyond our knowing,  
The number of His years beyond computing ;
- 27 For He withholdeth the drops of water,  
He bindeth up rain for His mist,
- 28 Which the clouds pour down,  
That they may drop upon mankind.
- [31 For by these He nourisheth peoples,  
He giveth food in abundance.]
- 29 Yea, who understandeth the spreading of His  
clouds ?  
The crashings of His pavilion ?

- 30 Lo, He spreadeth His mist about Him,  
He covereth the sun by day ;  
32 In His hands He holdeth the lightning,  
And giveth it command against the mark ;  
33 The thunder declareth concerning Him,  
As He exciteth wrath against iniquity.

xxxvii. 1 Yea, at this my heart trembleth,  
And leapeth out of its place ;  
2 Hearken to the rumble of His voice,  
And the murmur that goeth out of His  
mouth !  
3 Beneath the whole heavens He hurleth it,  
His lightning to the ends of the earth ;  
4 After it roareth His voice,  
He thundereth with the voice of His  
majesty,  
And holdeth it not back when His voice is  
heard.

- 5 God thundereth with His voice marvellously,  
He who doth great things, which we cannot know :  
6 For to the snow He saith : Fall to earth !  
To the downpour of rain : Be violent !  
7 He sealeth up the hand of every man,  
That men may know His work ;  
8 And the beasts go into coverts,  
And abide in their dens.

- [21 And now the light cannot be seen,  
It is obscured by the clouds ;  
22 But a wind passeth and cleanseth them,  
Out of the North cometh brightness ;]  
9 From the chamber cometh the tempest,  
And cold from the storehouses ;  
10 By the breath of God ice is given,  
And the expanse of waters is congealed.

- 11 Yea, He loadeth the clouds with moisture,  
 The thunder-cloud poureth forth His lightning,  
 12 And He maketh them go round about,  
 His guidance maketh them change ;  
 That they may do whatsoever He commandeth them,  
 Upon the face of His earthly world,  
 13 Whether for the chastisement of the peoples of the  
 earth,  
 Or for mercy He maketh it come.

CRITICAL NOTES.

xxxvi. 27b. 1. יִזְק (√ זקן = to bind. *cf.* Aram. Arab.).  
 M T יִזְקוּ. 29a. 1. מִי (Syr.). M T אִם. 30a. 1. אֲדוּ (Theod.  
 Targ.). M T אֲדוּ. 30b. 1. שְׁמֵשׁ בַּיָּמִים. M T שְׁרֵי-הַיָּמִים. 31.  
 transp. post 28. 31a. 1. יִזְוֶן. M T יִדִּין. 33a. 1. רַעְמוּ? M T  
 רָעוּ. 33b. 1. מִקְנֵה אֶף עַל עוֹלָה (cf. Targ. Theod. Syr.).  
 M T מִקְנֵה אֶף עַל-עוֹלָה. xxxvii. 4c. 1. יַעֲקֹבְנִי. M T יַעֲקֹבֵם.  
 6b. 1. עֲזוּ. M T עֲזִי. Omit גִּשְׁם מִמֶּר (dittogr.). 7b. 1.  
 אֲנָשׁ (or אֲנָשִׁים). M T אֲנָשִׁי. 9b. 1. מִמְּוִיִּם (cf. Ps. cxliv.  
 13). M T מִמְּוִרִים. 10a. 1. יִתֵּן (Syr. Targ.). M T יִתֵּן. 11b.  
 1. עֲנֵן. M T עֲנֵן. 12a-b. מִסֵּב אוֹתָם תִּהְפֹּכֶם תַּחֲבֹלָתוֹ. M T  
 מִסֵּב אוֹתָם תִּהְפֹּכֶם תַּחֲבֹלָתוֹ. 13a. 1. אֲמִי-אֶרֶץ יִ. M T אִם  
 לְאֶרֶץ.

## COMMENTARY.

22-25. God is all-powerful and all-wise, and subject to none. He is to be praised for His works, which are manifest to all men.

22. The first part of the verse refers to God's power, the second to His wisdom. *Exalteth*. Cf. 7c. God is able to restore Job to greatness. Some (e.g. Vulg., Dhorme) take the verb in the intransitive sense 'is exalted,' but the implied reference to verse 7 (cf. v. 11) is in favour of the active. *A teacher*. In xxxvi. 5, it is stated that He 'openeth the ear' of men, i.e. makes revelations to them. Elihu's argument here is much like that of Sophar in xi. 6ff: God's infinite wisdom is to be trusted rather than Job's limited knowledge.

23. God is subject to none. *Call Him to account*, lit. 'visit upon him' (Amos iii. 2, 14; Os. i. 4; ii. 15). The parallel shows that this is the meaning here. In xxxiv. 13 the meaning is different. With 23b compare ix. 12; xxi. 31.

24. Job's part is, therefore, not to find fault with God's works, but to praise them like all men. *Men have sung*. The reference is to poets who have sung of the glories of nature (Ps. viii. xix., etc.).

25. His works are manifest to all men, yet they view them from afar, and cannot realise their full magnitude and splendour. (Cf. 'How small a whisper do we hear of Him' xxvi. 14.)

26-28, 31. The rain-clouds. He binds up water in His clouds, and pours it down as rain, enabling the earth to produce food for man.

26. This verse is practically a repetition of 22—the power and wisdom of God. *Number of his years*. He is eternal. As wisdom comes with age and experience (xii. 12; xv. 7; xxx. 1; xxxii. 6-7), what must be the wisdom of one who is eternal?

27. An example of His power and wisdom—the evaporation of water to form clouds, and its fall as rain. *Withholdeth*. This may mean draweth up from the sea by evaporation, and Duhm argues from this that the Speeches of Elihu are later than those of Jahweh, as the writer of the latter did not know of evaporation. But the verb means, probably, 'hold back,' 'gather up,' and is the equivalent of 'bind up' in the parallel clause. *Bindeth up*. The verb is usually translated 'purify,' hence 'filter.' But there is evidence for the existence of a similar verb from a different root, = 'to bind up,' and this is more suitable here. Cf. 'Who bindeth up the waters in His clouds,' xxvi. 8.

28. *Pour down*. The verb is used as a transitive in Is. xiv. 8; Jer. ix. 17. *Mankind*, lit. 'many men.'

31. The majority of modern critics agree in placing this verse with 26-28, as it refers to the beneficial effects of the rain, not to the thunder. *By them*, i.e. by the rain-clouds of 28, or the waters. *He nourisheth*. The text has 'He judgeth,' but this does not agree



with the parallel clause. Houbigant's emendation 'nourisheth' is generally accepted. Cf. v. 10; xxxviii. 26-27; Is. lv. 10.

29-33. The thunder-clouds. They darken the heavens, blotting out the sun. They contain the lightning, the instrument of God's wrath.

29. *Yea, who?* So the Syriac. Hebrew has 'Yea, if.' *The crashings of His pavilion.* The thunder-cloud is God's tent (Ps. xviii. 12); and Elihu compares the thunder to the sound caused by the tent-covering when shaken by the wind.

30. This verse presents some difficulty. The first half reads: 'Lo, He spreadeth about Him His *light*,' i.e. the lightning (cf. Ps. xviii. 13). This, however, anticipates verse 32. Modern critics (e.g. Gray, Peters, Dhorme) follow the reading of Theodotion 'His mist.' Cf. 'Spreading His cloud about Him' (xxvi. 9), and 'He made darkness His hiding-place, His pavilion round about Him' (Ps. xviii. 11). The second part of the verse contains the peculiar phrase 'the roots of the *sea*.' This, on the analogy of 'roots of the mountains' (xxxviii. 9), would seem to mean the deepest part. But how can the clouds be said to cover the deepest part of the sea? Many critics (Budde, Beer, Ehrlich, etc.) emend to 'tops of the mountains,' which gives a natural picture. But the changes required are considerable. The reading 'the sun by day' requires much less change, and is confirmed by comparison with xxxvii. 21, where Elihu describes the thunder-clouds as obscuring the light of the sun. Cf. 'I will cover the sun with a cloud' (Ezech. xxxii. 7).

32. *He holdeth*, lit. 'He had hidden.' This use of the word 'hide' is confirmed by Is. xlix. 2: 'He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand hath *He hid* me.' The meaning is 'to hold in readiness.'

33. After the lightning comes the thunder. *The thunder.* The Hebrew has 'its companion,' thunder being the 'companion' of lightning; or 'its cry,' the thunder being the sound made by the lightning in its passage through the air. But a slight change gives the usual word for thunder. The second part of the verse is almost certainly corrupt: 'the cattle also concerning him that cometh up.' But as a slight change of pointing suffices to give the text translated above, which has some support from the Greek and Targum, it is inadvisable to make further changes. The thunder and lightning are the weapons of God's wrath (cf. xxxvii. 13; xxxviii. 22-25).

xxxvii. 1-4. Thunder is awe-inspiring. It is God's voice. His lightning flashes to the end of the earth, and is followed by a thunder-peal.

1. *At this*, i.e. at the sound of the thunder.

2. *His voice.* The thunder is often referred to as God's voice (xxviii. 26; Ps. xviii. 14; xxix. 3-9). The address to his hearers to hear is taken by many to indicate that a thunderstorm is in progress as he is speaking. This seems the most natural interpretation. Peake's objection that Elihu wanders off 'from the

thunder-storm to ice, snow and rain ' does not hold, because all these are naturally connected with the clouds. If the reference in xxxviii. 1 is to this storm, it is a strong proof that the speeches of Elihu belonged to the original draft of the book of Job. But see note on that verse.

3. God's weapons reach the end of the earth (*cf.* Matt. xxiv. 27). *He sendeth it.* 'It' is the lightning of 3b. The pronoun anticipates the real object.

4. The lightning is followed by a thunder-peal. *Voice of His majesty, cf.* Ps. xxix. 4. *Holdeth not back.* The verb occurs only here, lit. 'catch by the heel.' The repetition of the word 'voice' in 4-5a is unusual and inelegant. Possibly 4b is a gloss.

5-8. The heavy rains and snow of winter, which cause a cessation of man's work in the fields, and drive the wild beasts to their dens.

5. This verse resembles v. 9 and ix. 10. Some critics (Dhorme, Budde, etc.) would make the resemblance still closer by reading: 'God worketh marvels,' eliminating the reference to thunder. But this is not necessary. The meaning is: The same God who is the Author of the thunder is likewise the cause of countless other marvels. Of these he instances the snow and heavy rains of winter, which also come from the clouds.

6. In the winter the clouds pour down snow and heavy rains. These are distinguished from the light rains of autumn and spring which were specially beneficial. The heavy rains of winter could be destructive. *Be strong.* Heb. has 'His strength.' If this is correct, we must supply a verb: the downpour of rain (manifests) His strength. But it is preferable to point the word as an imperative, like the verb in 6a.

7-8. Men and animals are forced to seek shelter from the storm. *Sealeth the hand,* i.e. compels man to suspend his labours in the fields. *Cf.* xxiv. 16. *His work.* He compels man to acknowledge His power.

21-22a, 9-10. The winds disperse the clouds; the harsh winds of winter bring cold and ice.

21-22a. These two verses are out of place in their present context, and should probably be inserted here. They form a natural transition from the subject of the clouds (5-8), to that of the winds (9-10).

21. The clouds are always under God's control; though they blot out the sun, when the wind blows they are chased away, and the sky is clear once more. *Obscured.* The Hebrew word can be derived from two different roots, giving opposite meanings: a) 'to be bright' and b) 'to be dark.' If we take the former, we must interpret the clause as meaning: though we cannot see the sun, it is still shining in the heavens (Peters). The second meaning is to be preferred. *Cf.* xxxvi. 30.

22. *Cf.* 'His breath maketh the heavens bright' (xxvi. 13). *The North* here means the heavens, as in xxvi. 7. As soon as the

wind has dispersed the clouds, the sky becomes bright once more. *Brightness.* The Hebrew has 'gold,' which Dhorme takes to be a description of the rays of the sun as seen at the edge of the clouds. Most critics follow the suggestion of Graetz, and read 'brightness,' which requires the change of a letter.

9. The wind sometimes becomes a destructive tempest, and, in winter, brings cold. *Chamber.* Duhm, Dhorme, and others take this to be the equivalent of 'chambers of the South' (ix. 9). But the tempest does not always blow from the south, and, in any case, the vital word 'south' is absent. It is more probable that the word means 'repository' or 'storehouse.' Cf. 'Who bringeth forth the wind out of His treasures' (Ps. cxxxv. 7), and the reference to 'storehouses of snow' and 'treasuries of hail' in xxxviii. 22. *From the storehouses.* Heb. has 'from the scatterers.' Those critics who interpret the 'chamber' as a constellation take 'scatterers' to refer to the north winds, which are called 'scatterers' in the Koran (Sur. 51. 1). We have no evidence that they were called by this name among the Hebrews; and it is more likely that the word is a corruption of the word for 'storehouses' (cf. Ps. cxliv. 13). The point is that both the tempest and the cold come from God.

10. The cold winds of winter which cause the ice are likewise God's work. *Breath of God.* Cf. iv. 9; xxxii. 8.

11-13. The clouds are the bearers of moisture and of lightning; they go about the earth to do His will, to chastise or to bless.

11. Elihu returns to the feature of the clouds, which to him is the greatest mystery, viz. that they can retain water, and flash forth lightning. He repeats it in 15-16, where he turns to address Job (cf. xxvi. 8; xxxvi. 27).

12. God controls the movement of the clouds, guiding them like a chariot (cf. Ps. xviii. 11). The text, however, is defective, and contains some grammatical peculiarities, which are probably the result of corruption. A very slight change restores both grammatical structure and metre.

13. As stated in xxxvi. 31 and 33, the clouds are the agents both of God's favour and of His wrath. *Of the peoples of the earth.* Hebrew has 'whether to His earth,' which is certainly wrong. Some emend the text by omitting 'whether'; others seek a parallel to 'He maketh it come' ('it accomplisheth His will'—Dhorme); others seek a noun parallel to 'chastisement' and 'mercy.' A much simpler change gives the text translated above.

## 7. ELIHU'S FOURTH SPEECH, Section (c) xxxvii. 14-24

*Argument.* God is infinitely superior to man in wisdom and power. How little Job knows about the phenomena of the rain-clouds and the thunder! How helpless he feels as he contemplates the cloudless firmament, which God created! (14-18). Yet he demands the right to speak to God on equal terms. No, God is surrounded by majesty, and is inaccessible to man. He is mighty, but He is supremely just. Therefore it is for man to fear Him. (19-24.)

It has been suggested above (Introd. to ch. xxviii.) that in the primitive text chapter xxviii. may have been the continuation of this speech.

*Strophic arrangement* : 5 : 5.

- 14 Give ear unto this, O Job,  
     Stand, and consider the wonders of God !  
 15 Knowest thou aught of how God commandeth them ?  
     And how His cloud maketh lightning flash forth ?  
 16 Knowest thou aught of the balancings of the clouds,  
     The wonders of Him who is perfect in knowledge ?  
 17 Thou whose garments are hot,  
     When the land is still in the south-wind,  
 18 Dost thou stretch out the heavens with Him,  
     Which are firm as a molten mirror ?  
 19 Teach us what we shall say to Him,  
     For we cannot state our case because of darkness ;  
 20 Shall it be told Him that I speak ?  
     When a man speaketh, will he be swallowed up ? ( )  
 22 About God is terrible majesty,  
 23 The Almighty we cannot find ;  
     He is great in might and judgment,  
     And one that contendeth in justice He oppresseseth  
     not ;  
 24 Therefore shall men fear Him,  
     All the wise of heart shall not see Him.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

21-22a. transp. ante 9-10. 22a. זָהָר. MT זָהָב. 24b. 1.

יִרְאֶה. MT יִרְאֶה.

## COMMENTARY.

14-18. What does Job know of the mysteries of the lightning and rain? Can he bring about the cloudless skies and torrid heat?

15. The clouds have received God's commands (12). Does Job claim to know God's will, the precise command which is given to them? (*cf.* xxxviii. 33-35). Eliphaz, too, asked ironically if Job shared the secrets of God (xv. 8). *Commandeth them.* Lit. 'of God's putting upon them.' The meaning is made clear by comparison with xxxiv. 13, where the same verb is used (*cf.* xxxvii. 12). The plural pronoun refers to the clouds (12).

16. As in verse 11 the two features specially remarkable are: that the clouds flash lightning (15b), and that they retain water (16a). *The balancings.* The word occurs only here, and the meaning attached to it is based on the supposition that it is from a root meaning 'to level,' 'to smooth.' The reference is probably to the rain-laden clouds which remain poised in the air until He gives the command to the rain to fall (6, *cf.* xxvi. 8). Phenomena like these are a testimony of the infinite wisdom of God. In the next verse he gives an example of God's infinite power.

17. This scene forms a contrast to the clouds—a hot day in summer when the south-wind blows. Then man longs for the clouds, but sees nothing but the pitiless clear sky (*cf.* Eccclus. xliii. 2-4). Elihu asks Job whether he who suffers misery from the heat assisted God in stretching out the firmament. Does he act as God's partner in the creation and ordering of the universe?

18. *Heavens.* The word usually means 'clouds' (xxxviii. 37; Ps. lxxvii. 18) or the heavens (xxxv. 5; Prov. viii. 28; Ps. xxxvi. 6; lvii. 11). But the verb used ('beat out') and the parallel clause indicate that it is here a synonym of 'firmament.' The firmament was conceived as a solid vault, which held back the waters (Gen. i. 7; vii. 11; Is. xlv. 24; Ps. civ. 2). *Molten mirror.* The mirror was of polished metal (Ex. xxxviii. 8).

19-24. Surely one so privileged can guide us in our relations with God! He can tell us what to say, whether our words have reached God's ears, whether the result will be disastrous to us. But God is inaccessible. He is mighty and just, and to be feared.

19. Elihu continues in the ironical strain of 14-18. Job, being so closely associated with God, can act as our intermediary. *The darkness,* i.e. the darkness in which God who abides in the clouds is enveloped (xxiii. 17), or perhaps, figuratively, the darkness of ignorance.

20. *Shall it be told Him?* In xxxiii. 23-24, Elihu speaks of an angel who informs God of man's repentance. He asks here: when I speak, will there be some angel to convey my words to God? *Will he be swallowed up?* Job has frequently referred to the terror with which God's presence would fill him ix. 14-19;

xii. 14-15. We might translate: 'Or can a man say that He is *informed*?' (cf. Arab. *balaga* II=inform).

21-22a. These two verses interrupt the connection between 20 and 22b, and bring us back once more to the storm of 1-13. They describe the end of the storm, and their proper place is before verses 9-10.

22b-23a. God is inaccessible. There is a tacit rebuke to Job who has expressed a wish to meet God in judgment (xxiii. 2ff).

23b-c. He is mighty and just. The same attributes are emphasised at the beginning of the speech, xxxvi. 5-7. *One that contendeth in justice*. The text as it stands may be translated 'great in justice,' but this has been stated in 23b. The Greek reads the first word as a participle, though it is wrong in making it subject instead of object of the verb. Job has contended that, though innocent, he would be treated as guilty (ix. 20-24). Elihu repudiates this doctrine.

24. Man's duty is to fear God. *All the wise of heart*. According to ix. 4, the 'wise of heart' are the really wise, not merely (cf. Vulg.) wise in their own esteem. This being so, the verse as it stands creates difficulty: 'he seeth not all the wise of heart.' The Greek and Syriac make 'all the wise of heart' subject, and this is much more probable. Not even the wisest men can see Him. He is inaccessible.

SECTION IV  
SPEECHES OF JAHWEH  
XXXVIII-XLII





## SPEECHES OF JAHWEH. XXXVIII-XLII. 6.

1. *General features.* Jahweh's address to Job consists of two speeches, the first having as its theme the Wisdom, the second the Power of God. Neither is a direct answer to the problem discussed by Job and his three friends ; in fact, the problem of the suffering of the just is not mentioned at all. The purpose of the speeches is to rebuke Job for the extravagance of some of his statements made during the course of the debate. He complained that God, by not intervening in judgment, permits the just to suffer and the wicked to prosper. Who is he that he should question the propriety of God's action? If God fails to punish the wicked, it is not because He lacks the wisdom and the power to do so. It is the height of folly to question the wisdom or the justice of One who has created and planned the universe, who controls the forces of nature and endows the multitudes of living things with their various instincts and habits ; or to doubt the power of one who has created the formidable monsters, the Behemoth and Leviathan, before which even the bravest are filled with dismay. In other words, the secrets of divine providence and the motives of His action in regard to the just and the wicked in particular cases, are not to be probed by man.

2. *First Speech.* The changes of subject-matter combined with the changes in metrical structure enable us to divide it into four sections :—

- a) The creation of the universe, xxxviii. 1-15.
- b) The phenomena of nature, 16-38.
- c) The habits and instincts of animals, 39-xxxix. 12.
- d) A second group of animals, 13-30.

## JAHWEH'S FIRST SPEECH. Section a) xxxviii. 1-15.

*Argument.* Job is obscuring the issue with 'words without knowledge.' His speeches on the fate of the just and the wicked have been in effect a criticism of God's government of the world. Who is he that he should question God's action? What does he know about the marvellous work of creation, of the origin of the heavens (2-3, 31-32), of the earth (4-7), of the sea (8-11), and of the day 12-15)?

*Strophic arrangement :* 4 : 4 : 4.

xxxviii. 1 And Jahweh answered Job out of the storm  
and said :

- 2 Who is this that obscureth counsel  
With words without knowledge ?
- 3 Gird up thy loins like a man,  
I will question thee, and do thou let me know !
- [31 Dost thou fasten the bands of the Pleiades ?  
And untie the cords of Orion ?
- 32 Dost thou bring forth Venus in its season ?  
And guide the Bear and her children ?]
- 4 Where wert thou when I founded the earth ?  
Declare, if thou hast insight !
- 5 Who determined the measures thereof, for thou  
knowest,  
And who stretched the line upon it ?
- 6 Upon what were its pillar-sockets set ?  
And who laid its corner-stone,
- 7 When the morning stars sang together,  
And all the sons of God shouted for joy ?
- 8 Who shut in the sea with doors,  
When it burst forth, issuing from the womb ?
- 9 When I made the cloud its garment,  
And the dark cloud its swaddling clothes,
- 10 I set up my bound against it,  
And set bars and doors,

- 11 And said: Hitherto mayest thou come, and no further,  
And here shall thy proud waves be turned back.
- 12 Hast thou ordered the morning since thy days began?  
Hast thou shown the dawn its place,  
13 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth,  
And that the wicked be shaken out of it?  
14 So that it is changed like clay under the seal,  
And is dyed like a garment;  
15 And from the wicked their light is withdrawn,  
And the high arm is broken.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xxxviii. 8a. 1. מִי סָף (Vulg.). M T וַיִּסָּף. 10a. 1. וְאִשִּׁית  
(cf. Ps. civ. 9, Prov. viii. 29). M T וְאִשְׁבֵּר. 11b. 1. יִשׁוּבָב  
(or יִשְׁבֵּר). M T יִשִּׁית בָּ. 14b. 1. תִּצְבֵּעַ. M T וְתִצְבֹּעַ.

## COMMENTARY.

2-3, 31-32. Job is confusing the issue by speaking of things of which he knows nothing. If he claims wisdom, let him answer the following questions: Is it he that has formed the constellations of the Pleiades and Orion, Venus and the Great Bear?

1. *Out of the storm.* It has been remarked above (xxxvii. 2), that many critics take this to refer to the storm described by Elihu, and so they find in this verse a proof that the Speeches of Elihu are not a later addition. Others maintain that the storm is the normal accompaniment of a theophany (Ps. xviii.; Hab. iii.; Nah. i. 3; Ezech. i. 4; 1 K. xix. 11ff). But even though Job is addressed, rather than the latest speaker (Elihu), it does not follow that the Speeches of Elihu did not precede. For Jahweh's Speech is a rebuke to Job, and is naturally addressed to him. It is not a discussion of the general problem.

2. *Darkeneth counsel.* His statements tend to mislead his hearers, to lead them away from the true solution of the problem. *Words without knowledge.* Elihu claimed that his words were 'words of knowledge' (xxxiii. 3), and so formed a useful contribution to the solution.

3. Job again and again expressed a desire to argue his case with God. His request is now granted, but not precisely in the way he desired. Instead of formulating charges against him, which Job felt confident he could refute, God overwhelms him with questions which he cannot answer regarding the general order of the universe. The purpose is to show the folly of impugning God's integrity, when he knows so little of God's plan for the universe in general.

31-32. In our present text the references to the Creation begin with the earth (4-7), and there is no mention of the creation of the heavens. The analogy of passages like ix. 8ff; xxvi. 7ff, lead us to expect a description of the heavens also. Now, in 31-32 we have two verses which are out of harmony with the context, and interrupt a series in which the subject-matter is rain, ice, frost (28-30), and the laws which govern the thunder and the rain (33-35). These two verses relate to the heavenly bodies, and apparently their creation. In ix. 9 the same constellations are mentioned as manifesting the creative activity of God. It is therefore suggested that these two verses originally stood here.

31. *Orion . . . Pleiades.* Cf. ix. 9. *Fasten the bands . . . untie the cords.* The two constellations consist of groups of stars, which were bound together at the creation. Can Job rival God's work of creation, or undo it by loosing those bonds? (Cf. xxxvii. 18: 'Dost thou stretch out the heavens with him?'). There may be a reference to some popular myth in which Orion is identified with a giant bound in fetters (cf. *Prometheus*). According to Dhorme, Orion was identified with Nimrod (Com. on ix. 9).

32. *Venus*. The identification of this constellation is not certain (*cf.* Peters). Though the Hebrew is somewhat different, the word is probably the same as that in 2 K. xxiii. 5, in combination with 'the sun, moon, and all the host of heaven.' The importance of Venus in the Babylonian pantheon makes it probable that this is the planet intended in 2 K. xxiii. (*cf.* Vulg. *lucifer*, here). Others identify it with the *Corona Borealis* (Dhorme). In ix. 9, a different constellation is mentioned, viz. 'the chambers of the south.' *The Bear and her children*, i.e. the Great Bear and the Little Bear.

4-7. Creation of the earth. Has Job been a witness of its creation? If so, he can tell who made its plans, how it was built, how its completion was celebrated!

4. Eliphaz had already asked Job whether he is as old as the earth (xv. 8), and Elihu whether he stretched out the heavens with God (xxxvii. 18). Job seems to claim to know as much about God's purpose as God himself. *Founded*, i.e. created (*cf.* Is. xlviii. 13; li. 13; 16). The metaphor is that of the construction of a house.

5. The figure is that of a house, the plans of which are carefully prepared, and executed (*cf.* Ezech. xl. 3-xliii. 17). *Fixed the line*, i.e. laid out the ground-plan (*cf.* Zach. i. 16). *For thou knowest*. The clause may also be taken as conditional (if thou knowest), but verses 21-22 favour the view taken here.

6. The metaphor of the house is continued. The *pillar-sockets* are the bases on which the pillars are set. The *corner-stone* is not that of the foundations, but the crowning stone of the edifice (Ps. cxviii. 22; Jer. li. 26). The whole verse therefore includes the construction from the first to the last stone.

7. The angels celebrated the foundation and completion of the earth, as men rejoice in connection with the construction of a new building (*cf.* Zach. iv. 7; Esdr. iii. 10). *Morning stars*. The stars are associated with the angels in Ps. cxlviii. 3; Dan. iii. 58-63. *Sons of God*, the angels (*cf.* i. 6; Ps. xxix. 2; ciii. 20f).

8-11. Creation of the sea. Who confined the sea within bounds? God Himself, when he confined it in the clouds above and the ocean beneath.

8. The sea is conceived as a child, who is likely to develop into a dangerous monster unless restrained. *Who shut in*. The Hebrew has 'and he shut in'; but all modern critics follow the Vulgate, and read as above. *From the womb*. The writer does not specify from whose womb, whether that of Chaos (Duhm), or the bowels of the earth (Dhorme). It is doubtful if he had anything in particular in his mind. He means simply 'when it was created.'

9. But the sea was subject to God, and dependent on his care. The figure of the babe is continued. The clouds are its garments and swaddling clothes. According to the usual inter-

pretation, the reference is to the clouds which gather over the surface of the sea. But Sophar also spoke of God 'binding up the water in the clouds' (xxvi. 8), and Elihu of his 'binding up, the drops of water' (xxxvi. 16), and the same is probably the meaning here. At the same time that He created the clouds, and so bound up the waters in them, He also imposed his command on the sea. Cf. the division of the waters at Creation into the waters above and the waters under the firmament (Gen. i. 7).

10. *I set up My bound.* The Hebrew has 'I broke,' and the reference is supposed to be to the rocks and cliffs which form an irregular coast-line. But the verb is usually regarded as the result of corruption. An interchange of the verbs in 10a and 11b would give the required sense in each case (cf. Dhorme). The reading 'set up' is suggested by Ps. civ. 9; Prov. viii. 29. The *bars and doors* are those of the prison in which the sea is confined. The reference is, of course, to the separation of land from water. Cf. Gen. i. 9ff; Ps. xxxiii. 7.

11. *Be turned back.* Here again the Hebrew is probably corrupt. Hebrew reads: 'and here he shall put (a limit) upon the pride of thy waves.' The word 'limit' has to be supplied, if the verb is retained. Some critics read 'shall be broken' (cf. 10a), others 'shall be stilled.' The former has a parallel in Lev. xxvi. 19; the latter in Is. xiii. 11; (Ezech. vii. 24; xxx. 18). The reading 'turned back' is closer to the consonantal text. The thought is the same as in Psalm civ. 9: 'lest they return to cover the earth.'

12-15. Is it by Job's command that the day follows night, dispelling the darkness, revealing the outlines of the earth, and compelling the wicked to desist from their work?

12. Cf. Ps. civ. 20ff. *Since thy days began*, lit. 'from thy days.' Cf. xxvii. 6. Job has not been the author of day and night during his own brief existence, much less during the countless ages that have passed since the creation.

13. Night is like a pall which covers the earth, under the protection of which the wicked ply their trade. Cf. xxiv. 13ff. The dawn seizes their covering, and shakes them out (cf. Ps. civ. 20ff).

14. In the morning light, the earth once more assumes form and colour. *Like clay.* Just as the flat surface of the clay shows the outlines of a well-defined image after the impression of the seal, so the contours of the earth become visible at dawn. *It is dyed.* The Hebrew has 'they stand forth.' The plural must refer to the wicked, but this gives a very unnatural figure. The best emendation is that suggested by Ehrlich and Beer (in Kittel's edition), viz. 'is dyed' with the earth as subject. The vegetation is the earth's garment (cf. Ps. lxxv. 14).

15. The wicked, whose nefarious deeds are favoured by darkness, are now discovered, and their crimes punished. *Their light*, i.e. darkness, which is to them what daylight is for other men. Cf. xxiv. 16; Ps. civ. 20.

## JAHWEH'S FIRST SPEECH. Section b) xxxviii. 16-38.

*Argument.* The natural phenomena, which are familiar to Job from his daily experience, are nevertheless mysteries to him as to their origin, their operation, and the general laws by which they are governed. What does he know of the extent of the earth (16-18)? Of the abode of light and darkness (19-21)? Of the forces that regulate snow and hail and lightning (22-24) and the rains of winter (25-27)? What is the origin of rain and dew, ice and frost (28-30)? Can Job, too, command the heavens, and bring about thunder and rain (33-35)? If not, who regulates the movement of the thunder-clouds and the rain-clouds (36-38)?

*Strophic arrangement* : 3 : 3 : 3.

- 16 Hast thou entered into the depths of the sea ?  
And hast thou walked in the recesses of the deep ?
- 17 Have the gates of Death been revealed to thee ?  
And hast thou seen the gates of Death-shade ?
- 18 Hast thou considered the breadth of the earth ?  
Declare, if thou knowest, its full extent !
- 19 Which is the way to where light dwelleth ?  
And darkness, where is the place thereof ?
- 20 For thou takest it to its domain,  
For thou discernest the paths to its house !
- 21 Thou knowest, for thou wert born then,  
And the number of thy years is great !
- 22 Hast thou entered the storehouses of the snow ?  
And hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,
- 23 Which I have reserved for the time of distress,  
For the day of battle and war ?
- 24 Which is the way to where the lightning is parted,  
That it scatter flames upon the earth ?
- 25 Who hath cleft a channel for the flood ?  
And a way for the thunderstorm ?
- 26 Causing it to rain on no-man's land,  
On a wilderness where no man is ?
- 27 Satisfying waste and desolation,  
And causing the thirsty land to bring forth tender  
grass ?

28 Hath rain a father ?

And who hath begotten the drops of dew ?

29 From whose womb came forth the ice ?

And the hoar-frost of heaven, who gave it birth ?

30 The waters are made solid as a stone,

And the face of the deep is congealed.

33 Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven ?

Canst thou establish its rule on the earth ?

34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds ?

That abundance of waters cover thee ?

35 Canst thou send forth the lightnings, that they may  
go,

And say to thee : Here we are ?

36 Who hath put wisdom in the clouds ?

And who hath given insight to my covert ?

37 Who numbereth the clouds by wisdom ?

And who tilteth out the water-skins of heaven,

38 When the dust is fused into a compact mass,

And the clods cleave fast together ?

#### CRITICAL NOTES.

24b. 1. יְקָרִים. MT קָרִים. 27b. 1. צֵמָה (cf. Is. xliv. 3; Deut. xxix. 18). MT מִצָּה. 30a. 1. יִתְחַמֵּא (cf. Ar. *hama'* = to be hard). MT יִתְחַבֵּא. 31-32. transp. post 3. 34b. 1. תִּעֲנֶנָּה (G.) ? MT תִּבְסֶנָּה. 36b. 1. לְשִׁבִּי (cf. Lam. ii. 6). MT לְשִׁבִּי.



## COMMENTARY.

16-18. The depth and breadth of the earth. Cf. xxvi. 5ff.

16. *Depths of the sea.* The word does not occur elsewhere (it has been suggested as an emendation in xxviii. 11). It is usually translated 'springs'; but both the context and the parallelism favour the meaning 'depths' (as Vulg.) or 'bottom' (cf. xxviii. 11). Instead of '*gates of deathshade*' the Greek has '*porters of death-shade.*' 'Death' and 'Death-shade' are synonyms of Sheol.

17. Sheol is conceived as situated in the depths of the earth (cf. xxvi. 5). God's power extends to the depths of Sheol (xxvi. 5; Ps. cxxxix. 8), does Job's knowledge reach so far?

18. Can Job tell all about the surface of the earth? Compare xxvi. 5ff and xxviii. 13ff for similar references to the height and depth, length and breadth of the created universe.

19-21. Light and darkness.

19. Light is conceived as an entity distinct from and independent of the sun, moon and stars (cf. Gen. i. 3; Eccles. xii. 2). Similarly, darkness is not the mere negation of light, but a positive entity. Both have their abode beyond human ken, and make their appearance on the earth alternately.

20. This and the following verses are ironical like verse 5. Job must know where light and darkness dwell, for it is he that brings them forth in turn to their domain (the earth), and leads them back again to their homes. *Its domain*, i.e. the place where it exercises its daily function. Cf. Gen. i. 18: '*to rule over the day and over the night.*'

21. Being as old as the world itself (cf. xv. 7), Job must have witnessed the creation of light, and God's plans regarding it.

22-24. Snow and hail and lightning.

22. Snow and hail and lightning are grouped together because they are all the instruments of God's wrath. 'All these (fire, hail, etc.) are created for their uses, and they are in His treasury, against the time when they are required' (Ecclus. xxxix. 29; cf. Exod. ix. 18; Jos. x. 11; Deut. xxxii. 34). *Storehouses*, cf. 'the chamber' and the 'storehouses' (xxvii. 9), and 'He bringeth forth wind from His *treasuries*' (Jer. x. 13).

23. Cf. xxxvi. 33; xxxvii. 13.

24. In the Hebrew the parallelism is defective. In the first clause we have 'light' and in the second 'east-wind.' As 'light' has been mentioned already (19-21), many modern critics read 'wind' in the first half of the verse instead of 'light,' and so obtain a better parallelism. But we have noticed in xxxvii. 5-6 that snow and hail are closely associated with thunder and lightning, and in Ps. xviii. 'hail and coals of fire' are hurled from the thunder-cloud. Hence 'light' (i.e. 'lightning' as in

xxxvi. 32 ; xxxvii. 3, 11, 15) is quite in keeping with the context. It is the word in the second clause that is corrupt. The verb 'scatter' is not the appropriate one to be used of wind ; moreover the verb is transitive, not intransitive. A slight change gives 'flames' or 'sparks' (cf. Is. x. 16).

#### 25-27. The rain-storm.

25. The *flood* here has reference to the heavy rains of winter. The *thunder-storm*. The meaning of the Hebrew word is disputed ; but wherever it is used, it is in connection with heavy rain, flood, etc. (xxviii. 26 ; Zach. x. 1 ; Ecclus. xxxv. 26 ; xl. 13). The parallel shows that it has reference not to the thunder-storm itself, but to the heavy rains which follow. The 'channel' refers to the 'flood-gates' of heaven by which the waters are allowed to descend (Gen. vii. 11 ; viii. 2). The second part of the verse repeats xxviii. 26b.

26. The rain of winter falls even where no man dwells. This indicates that God has care for other creatures as well as man. He provides food for the animals of the desert.

27. *Thirsty land*. Heb. has 'causing the *place* of tender grass to sprout.' The word for 'place' is unusual (lit. 'source'). The transposition of two letters gives 'thirsty,' a synonym of the 'wilderness' (Is. xlv. 3 ; Deut. xxix. 18).

#### 28-30. Rain and dew, ice and frost.

28. As 'rain' has been mentioned in 25-27, Bickell and Duhm strike out this verse as a variant of 27. But in 25-27 there is question of the 'path' of the rain, by which it is guided even to the uninhabited desert ; here there is question of the origin or nature of rain.

29. The figure of 'father' and 'mother' is equivalent to author or creator.

30. *The waters are made hard*. There is no doubt about the meaning, but it is questionable if the meaning can be got from the present text. Heb. has 'hide themselves' ; but 'hide themselves like a stone' is certainly wrong. Some critics (Merx, Budde, Gray, Peake) transpose the two verbs, and read : 'the waters are *frozen* like a stone, and the face of the deep *is hidden*.' Others emend the first verb. Dhorme (following Hitzig) reads a verb meaning 'coagulate.' But it is better to read the verb corresponding to the Arabic *hama* 'to be hard,' which requires the change of a letter.

#### 31-32. See above after verses 2-3.

33-35. Can Job bring about the phenomena of the cloudburst and the lightning ?

33. *The ordinances of heaven* are the laws which govern the movements of the heavenly bodies, to which are due the changes of season, rain, thunder, etc. (cf. Jer. xxxi. 35f). These have a profound influence on the condition of the earth, and by ordering

the movements of the heavenly bodies, Job could control its ('i.e. heaven's) rule on the earth.

34. Can Job, for instance, command the rain and the lightning? *Cover thee.* The Greek has 'answer thee,' which may be right. The Hebrew may be due to the influence of xxii. 11b, which is identical with 34b.

35. The lightning, like the rain, is God's agent (xxxvi. 32-33; xxxvii. 13). Will it answer Job's command also? Cf. Bar. iii. 33-35.

36-38. The wisdom which guides the movements of the thunder-clouds and the rain-clouds.

36. The theme is the continuation of that of the previous strophe. Job has no control over the movements of the heavenly bodies, and particularly lightning and rain. Yet the latter are guided and controlled in marvellous fashion. If Job is not their guide, who is? But the interpretation is rendered extremely difficult owing to the obscurity of the two words translated 'clouds' and 'covert.' There are three distinct lines of interpretation: a) The first word occurs only in Ps. li. 8, where it means apparently 'the heart' of man. A corresponding sense is attached to the second word, which is found only here, and the whole verse means: Who has endowed the human mind with wisdom? b) Others, starting from the second word, which in Rabbinical literature means 'the cock,' take the first as meaning 'the ibis,' the bird sacred to Thot, the Egyptian Mercury (Dhorme). The verse would then refer to the marvellous instinct by which the cock heralds the dawn, or, according to some popular traditions, the coming of rain, and by which the ibis announces the rise of the Nile. c) The majority of critics interpret both words according to the context, which undoubtedly refers to the clouds, although the precise meaning of each word remains doubtful. The puzzling word in the second half of the verse is very like that for 'pavilion' (xxvi. 9; xxxvi. 29), the thunder-cloud which forms God's tent. The meaning then is: Who has endowed the thunder-cloud with the wisdom by virtue of which it moves unerringly towards its goal, and pours out lightning when required? The same thought is expressed by Elihu in xxxvii. 15.

37. *Numbereth the clouds*, i.e. determine the exact quantity of the rain which is to fall. *Tilleth out*, lit. 'causeth to lie down.' *Water-skins of heaven*, the clouds. Cf. xxvi. 8; Ecclus. xliii. 8, and the Vulgate of Ps. xxxiii. 7: '*congregans sicut in utre aquas maris.*'

38. The result of the rain-fall. The dust caused by the prolonged drought is again transformed into a solid mass. It solidifies like molten metal.

JAHWEH'S FIRST SPEECH. Section c), xxxviii. 39-xxxix. 12.

*Argument.* The habits and instincts of certain classes of animals, viz. the carnivora (lion and raven), the rock-goat and deer, the wild ass and the wild ox.

*Strophic arrangement* : 4 : 4 : 4.

- 39 Dost thou hunt the prey for the lioness ?  
     Dost thou satisfy the appetite of the lion-cubs ?  
 40 When they crouch in their dens,  
     And abide in their lairs ?  
 41 Who provideth for the raven his food  
     . . . . .  
     When his young cry unto God,  
     And wander about without food ?
- xxxix. 1 Knowest thou the birth of the rock-goats ?  
     And dost thou mark the calving of the  
         hinds ?  
     2 Dost thou number the months they must  
         fulfil ?  
     And knowest thou the time of their bringing  
         forth ?  
     3 They bow themselves, give birth to their young,  
         They bring forth their progeny ;  
     4 Their young are healthy, they grow up in the  
         desert,  
     They go forth, and return not to them.
- 5 Who hath let the wild ass go free ?  
     And who hath loosed the bonds of the wild ass ?  
 6 Whose home I have made the wilderness,  
     And whose dwelling-place the salt land ;  
 7 He scorneth the tumult of the city,  
     And heareth not the shouts of the driver ;  
 8 He exploreth the mountains, his pasture,  
     He seeketh after every green thing.

- 9 Will the wild ox consent to serve thee ?  
 Will he spend the night at thy manger ?
- 10 Wilt thou bind him with a halter of cord ?  
 Will he harrow the valleys after thee ?
- 11 Wilt thou trust in him because his strength is great ?  
 And wilt thou entrust thy labour to him ?
- 12 Wilt thou rely on him to return ?  
 Will he gather thy grain to thy threshing-floor ?

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xxxix. 1a. omit עַת (dittogr.). 3a. 1. תַּפְּלִטָּנָה (cf. G. Sym.)  
 MT תַּפְּלִחָנָה. 8a. 1. יְתוּר (G. Vulg. Targ.). MT יְתוּר. 10a.  
 1. הִתְקַשְׁרֵנוּ. MT הִתְקַשְׁרֵי־רִים. 1. בְּבָלָם עֲבַת. (cf. Ps. xxxii. 9).  
 MT בְּתֵלָם עֲבַתוּ. 12b. 1. לְגֶרְנֶה. MT וְגֶרְנֶה.

## COMMENTARY.

xxxviii. 39-41. The lion and the raven.

39. It is God, and not Job, who provides food for the lion, by guiding other animals to the vicinity of its lair (*cf.* Ps. civ. 20-22).

41. The raven is associated with the lion, because it belongs to the carnivora. It is probable that a line has dropped out after 41a. It may have referred to the jackal.

41b-c. The young ravens (or the jackals) wander about in search of food, and God provides them with the dead carcasses of animals on which they feed (*cf.* Ps. cxlvii. 9).

xxxix. 1-4. The rock-goat and the deer.

1. These animals haunt the parts of the earth remote from human habitation; but they are not bereft of God's care. *The birth.* The Hebrew has 'the time of the birth' but it is generally agreed that the word 'time' is due to the repetition of the final letters of the previous word, and should be omitted.

2. God, and not Job, determined the time of gestation of these animals.

3. *Give birth to*, lit. 'cause (their young) to cleave (the womb). Many critics prefer to read the more usual word for 'give birth to' (*cf.* xxi. 10; Greek and Sym. here). *Their progeny.* The word usually means 'birth-pangs,' hence some translate 'get rid of their birth-pangs.' But the word has the meaning 'foetus' in Arabic, and that may be the case here also.

4. God watches over the young; they thrive and mature in the desert, and become independent of the mother's care.

5-8. The wild ass.

5. The wild ass is the supreme example of unrestrained freedom (xi. 12; Gen. xvi. 12; Os. viii. 9; Is. xxxii. 14).

6. His home is the wild barren waste far from men. *Salt land*, land unfit for cultivation (Ps. cvii. 34; Jer. xvii. 6).

7. He shuns civilization, where his domesticated brother is the patient drudge of man.

8. His pasture is not limited by man-made boundaries. He roams over the whole mountain-land. He is not fastidious, every form of vegetation furnishes food for him.

9-12. The wild ox.

9. The *wild ox* is now usually identified with the *rimu* or wild bull frequently mentioned in the hunting exploits of the Assyrian kings. It was noted for its great strength. Here it is contrasted (implicitly) with the domestic ox which serves man in the labours of the field.

10. The text of the first half of this verse is corrupt. Heb. 'Wilt thou bind the wild ox in the furrows of his cord?' The substitution of the pronoun for 'the wild ox' may be regarded

as certainly correct. The present text arose through ditto-graphy. The usual emendation of the last phrase is 'with cords' instead of 'of his cord': 'Wilt thou bind *him* in the furrow *with cords*?' Instead of this I suggest reading 'halter' for 'in the furrow' (a change of a letter): 'with a halter of cord.' *After thee.* In harrowing, the animal was led.

11. The wild ox has great strength, but he is untamed, and man cannot use him for his work in the fields.

12. The domestic ox returns faithfully with his burden from the field to the threshing-floor. Will the wild-ox be equally docile?

JAHWEH'S FIRST SPEECH. Section d) xxxix. 13-30.

*Argument.* This section of the speech deals with the characteristics of another group of animals, viz., the ostrich (13-18), the war-horse (19-25), and the hawk and vulture (26-30).

*Strophic arrangement* : 5 : 5 : 5.

- 13 Can the wing of the ostrich be compared  
     With the pinions of the stork and the falcon ?  
 14 For she leaveth her eggs on the ground,  
     And on the dust she warmeth them,  
 15 And she forgetteth that the foot may crush them,  
     And that the beasts of the field may trample them ;  
 16 She is cruel to her children, as if they were not  
     hers,  
     That her labour may be in vain, she hath no care :  
 17 (*Because God hath deprived her of wisdom,*  
     *And hath not imparted to her understanding*) ;  
 18 What time she spurreth herself on high,  
     She laugheth at the horse and his rider.
- 19 Dost thou give the horse his might ?  
     Dost thou clothe his neck with a quivering mane ?  
 20 Dost thou make him leap like a locust ?  
 [25a At the sound of the trumpet he saith : Aha !]  
     The glory of his snorting is terrible,  
 21 He paweth in the valley and exulteth ;  
     In his strength he goeth forth to meet weapons,  
 22 He laugheth at fear, and is not dismayed,  
     And turneth not back from the sword ;  
 23 The quiver rattleth against him,  
     The flashing point of lance and javelin,  
 24 Quivering and excited he swalloweth the ground ,  
     He believeth not in the sound of the trumpet,  
 25 And afar off he scenteth the battle,  
     The thunder of the captains and the shouting.



- 26 Is it by thy wisdom that the hawk doth soar,  
That he spreadeth his wings toward the south ?  
27 Is it at thy behest that the vulture goeth aloft,  
And maketh his nest on high ?  
28 On the crag he dwelleth and abideth,  
On the peak of the crag and the fastness ;  
29 From thence he spieth out the prey,  
His eyes look into the far distance ;  
30 His young ones suck up the blood,  
And where the slain are, there is he.

CRITICAL NOTES.

- 13a. 1. הַכֶּנֶף. M T כֶּנֶף. 1. נְעִלְסָה (cf. Vulg.). M T נְעִלְסָה.  
13b. 1. אֶל אֲבֵרָתָא (cf. Vulg.). M T אֶל אֲבֵרָתָא. 1. וְנִיץ (cf.  
Vulg.). M T וְנִצָּה. 17. omit (gloss). 21a. 1. יִחַפֵּר (G. Vulg.  
Syr.). M T יִהְפְּרוּ. 24b. 1. בְּקוֹל. M T בִּי-קוֹל. 25a. transp.  
post 20a. 30a. 1. יִלְעֵוּ. M T יַעֲלֵוּ.

## COMMENTARY.

13-18. The ostrich. The wings of the ostrich cannot compare with those of the stork or falcon; hence she must nest on the sand, to the danger of her progeny; yet, despite her handicap, she can outstrip a horse.

13. The difficulty of this verse is such that Theodotion translated only three words out of six; the others were merely transcribed. The original Septuagint omitted 13-18. The first half reads: 'the wing of the ostrich is joyful.' The word for 'ostrich' (lit. 'shrill cries') occurs only here; but, whether the text is correct or not, there is no doubt that the ostrich is the bird intended. The verb 'is joyful' is not very appropriate, and must be taken to mean 'beat joyously.' The second part of the verse reads 'or a kindly pinion and feather?' Here the difficulty of interpretation is complicated by the ambiguity of the words: 'kindly' might also be translated 'stork,' and 'pinion' is like the word for 'hawk.' There is an abundance of suggested emendations, but none is quite satisfactory. The Vulgate (*penna struthionis similis est pennis herodii et accipitris*) comes very near the meaning required; and we have but to make this interrogative to make the strophe begin like all the others. The changes required to get this meaning are really very few (see critical note). *Be compared.* The verb is used in this sense in Is. xl. 18; Ps. xl. 6 (cf. Job xxviii. 17-19; xxxvi. 19; Ps. lxxxix. 7). The point of comparison is that the wings of the stork and the falcon enable the birds to fly aloft, while the rudimentary wings of the ostrich compel it to stay on the ground.

14. Because of her defective wings, she is obliged to lay her eggs on the sand, instead of building her nest on trees or in inaccessible places. *Leaveth.* It was noticed even by the ancients that the ostrich often left her eggs unprotected, and that, in addition to the eggs which were hatched, other eggs were laid outside the nest which formed food for the young (cf. Bochart, *Hieroz.* II. 250ff). *Warmeth*, i.e. hatcheth them. Not that she leaves them to be hatched out by the hot sand of the desert; but instead of laying them in a nest on trees or elsewhere, she deposits them on the sand and hatches them there.

15. Unlike the eggs of the stork and the falcon, the ostrich's eggs are in danger from every man or beast that passes by.

16. By thus exposing them to danger, she deals hardly with her chicks. Cf. 'cruel as ostriches' (Lam. iv. 3). *Her labour*, i.e. of laying the eggs. The point is still her apparent want of foresight in laying her eggs in such an exposed place.

17. The reason for the apparent cruelty is to be sought in the ostrich's proverbial stupidity. But it must be remembered that God is the speaker, and that therefore the mention of God makes the whole verse suspicious. Besides, the reference to her stupidity introduces a new note, which mars the unity of the strophe. The description of the other animals leads us to expect a reference to the special qualities bestowed on the ostrich by God, rather

than the refusal of special gifts, as here. On these grounds, the verse is probably to be regarded as a later addition.

18. The speed of the ostrich, despite her defective wings. *Spurreth herself*. The verb is used only here, and the precise meaning is doubtful. It is usually connected with an Arabic root which means 'to urge on (a horse)'; the wings flapping as she speeds along are, as it were, the spurs which urge her to still greater speed.

19-25. The War-horse. The strophe is arranged in triplets, each of which describes a distinct feature of the war-horse as the trumpet sounds for battle: his physical qualities, his restiveness, his courage, his speed, his instinct for the battle.

19-20a. His strength, majesty and agility. *With a quivering mane*. This is the usual interpretation. But the word occurs only here, and the meaning is not quite certain. *Like a locust*. Cf. Joel ii. 4; Apoc. ix. 7, where the locust is compared to a horse.

25a, 20b-21a. The excitement of the horse when the trumpet sounds: he neighs, snorts, and prances about. The reference to the sound of the trumpet comes too late in the present text, and where it now stands, it interrupts the connection between 24b and 25b. By inserting it here, we get an appropriate introduction to what follows, and avoid the awkward and abrupt transition between 20a and 20b.

21b-22. His courage. *In his strength*. In the text these words are connected with 21a; but both sense and metre are improved if they are taken with 21b (cf. Greek, Budde, Duhm, Peters). *Laugheth at fear*. There is some evidence (3 MSS., Syriac, cf. Greek) for a different reading 'laugheth at a pitfall,' which is preferred by some scholars as a better parallel to 'weapons' and 'sword.'

23-24a. The rattle of his rider's weapons can be heard as he careers along. The verb in 24a occurs in the sense 'swallow' in Gen. xxiv. 17, and the clause here is generally taken as a poetical expression for 'moves with speed' (cf. 'devour the miles'). A similar idiom is found in Arabic (cf. Gray, *ad loc.*).

24b-25. His instinctive knowledge of the conflict. He does not need the trumpet call to tell him of the coming battle; his own instinct is a surer guide. He scents the battle afar off. Many modern critics take the verb of 24b in a different sense 'he standeth not still at the sound of the trumpet.' But after the description of his excitement from verse 20 onwards, this comes as an anticlimax. *Thunder of the captains*, i.e. the shouting of orders during the battle; *shouting*, the victory shouts after the battle, or the war-cries of the combatants.

26-30. The hawk and the vulture. What is it that urges the hawk to migrate at the approach of winter, or the vulture to make his home in an inaccessible peak of rock?

26. *By thy wisdom*, i.e. by wisdom received from thee.

28. On a *peak*, lit. 'tooth' (1 Sam. xiv. 4) cf. *Dent du midi*.

30. Even the nestlings manifest the same instincts as the older birds. With job cf. Matt. xxiv. 28; Luke xvii. 37.

## JAHWEH'S SECOND SPEECH, xl.-xlii. 6.

*Argument.* The greater part of the Speech is devoted to the description of the two monsters Behemoth and Leviathan. This is preceded by an introductory section (xl. 1-14) in which is included Jahweh's challenge to Job to answer the first Speech, and Job's reply declining, and followed by a concluding strophe in which Job briefly replies to both Speeches, and acknowledges the omniscience and omnipotence of God.

a) *Introductory.* Jahweh challenges Job to answer His questions, and Job admits his inability to do so. Well, if he has not wisdom, perhaps he has power equal to God's? (2-9). Let him array himself in his majesty, and give a display of his power by overthrowing the wicked! (10-14).

b) *The Behemoth.* This is a creature like man, but his size and strength are such that no man dare attack him (15-19). He haunts the jungle by the river, but fears neither the flood nor the attacks of men (20-24).

c) *Leviathan.* Unlike other animals, the Leviathan cannot be made subject to man's will, as a captive, or a play-thing, or as an article of commerce (25-30). If the creature is so terrible that even the boldest dare not face him, what must be the power of his Creator? (31-xli. 3).

d) *The Leviathan's body.* His breast, jaws and back (4-9); his eyes, mouth, nostrils and neck (10-14); the hardness of his flesh, which no weapon can pierce (15-21); his track in the mud and in the water (22-26).

e) *Job's reply.* He confesses that the mysteries of divine providence are beyond his comprehension, and now realises more fully than before the omnipotence of God (xlii. 1-6).

*Strophic arrangement : 6 : 5 : 6.*

xl. 1 And Jahweh answered Job and said :

2 Will he that contendeth with the Almighty give way?

Will he that argueth with God answer it ?

3 And Job answered and said :

4 Behold, I am of little account, how shall I answer thee ?

I lay my hand upon my mouth ;

5 Once I have spoken, and I will not answer,

Yea, twice, and I will not again.

6 And Jahweh answered Job out of the storm and said :

7 Gird up thy loins like a man,

I will question thee, and do thou let me know !

- 8 Wilt thou make void my judgment,  
    Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be  
    justified ?
- 9 Hast thou an arm like God ?  
    And canst thou thunder with a voice like Him ?
- 10 Pray deck thyself with majesty and splendour,  
    And array thyself with glory and state ;
- 11 Shed abroad the fury of thy wrath,  
    Look upon every one that is proud and abase him ;
- 12 Look upon every one that is high, and humble him,  
    And tread down the wicked in their place ;
- 13 Hide them in the dust together,  
    Bind up their faces in the hidden world ;
- 14 Then will I also confess unto thee,  
    That thy own hand can save thee.
- 15 Behold, the Behemoth, which I made with thee,  
    Doth eat grass like the ox ;
- 16 Behold, his strength which is in his loins,  
    His might in the muscles of his belly ;
- 17 His tail is firm as a cedar,  
    The sinews of his thighs are knit together ;
- 18 His bones are tubes of brass,  
    His frame like bars of iron ;
- [xli. 17 At his rising up mighty men are afraid,  
    And panic-stricken hide themselves :]
- 19 " This is the chief of the ways of God !  
    Let Him that made him bring near His  
    sword ! "
- 20 Though the mountains yield him food,  
    And all the beasts of the field play there,
- 21 Beneath the lotus-trees he lieth,  
    In the covert of the reed and the swamp ;
- 22 The lotus-trees screen him, as his shade,  
    The poplars of the valley compass him about ;
- 23 Lo, should a river overflow, he is not alarmed,  
    He reckoneth not, should a Jordan gush forth ;

- 24 Who is he that can take him in his lair ?  
Or pierce his nose with barbs ?
- 25 Canst thou draw out the Leviathan with a fish-hook ?  
Or press down his tongue with a line ?
- 26 Canst thou put a cord in his nose ?  
Or pierce his jaw with a hook ?
- 27 Will he make many supplications to thee ?  
Or will he speak tender words to thee ?
- 28 Will he make a covenant with thee ?  
Wilt thou take him as a slave for ever ?
- 29 Wilt thou play with him, as with a bird ?  
Wilt thou leash him for thy maidens ?
- 30 Will the companies of fishermen bargain about him ?  
Will they divide him among the merchants ?
- 31 Wilt thou fill his skin with barbs ?  
And his head with harpoons ?
- 32 Lay thy hand upon him,  
Remember the battle, do so no more !
- xli. 1 Behold, thy hope shall prove vain,  
Even a mighty man is flung down at the sight of  
him ;
- 2 Is he not fierce if one rouse him up ?  
And who is he that can stand before Me ?
- 3 Who ever confronted Me and was safe ?  
That which is beneath the whole heavens is  
Mine.
- 4 I will not be silent concerning his limbs,  
And the greatness of his strength, and the grace of  
his form ;
- 5 Who can open the front of his tunic ?  
Within his doublet who can penetrate ?
- 6 Who can open the doors of his face ?  
Round about his teeth is terror !
- 7 His back is lines of shields,  
It is stamped with a seal of flint ;

- 8 Each one toucheth the other,  
And no breath can come between them ;  
9 Each one cleaveth to the other,  
They stick fast, they cannot be sundered.
- 10 His sneezing flasheth forth light,  
And his eyes are like the eyelids of the dawn ;  
11 Out of his mouth go forth torches,  
As it were, sparks of fire leap forth ;  
12 Out of his nostrils cometh forth smoke,  
As from a pot heated and boiling ;  
13 His breath setteth coals ablaze,  
And a flame cometh out of his mouth ;  
14 In his neck abideth strength,  
And before him boundeth dismay.
- 15 The flakes of his flesh cleave together,  
It is firm upon him, and immovable ;  
16 His heart is firm as a stone,  
Yea, firm as a nether millstone ;  
18 Should the sword reach him, it would not avail,  
Nor the spear, nor the dart, nor the javelin ;  
19 He deemeth iron as straw,  
And bronze as rotten wood ;  
20 The arrow cannot pierce him,  
Sling-stones are turned for him into stubble ;  
21 A club seemeth a reed to him,  
And he laugheth at the whirring of the javelin.
- 22 Beneath him are the edges of potsherds,  
He spreadeth a threshing-sledge upon the mire ;  
23 He maketh the deep to boil like a perfume-pan,  
The sea he maketh like seething perfume ;  
24 Behind him a path shineth,  
One would think the deep to be hoary ;  
25 Upon the earth there is not his like,  
That is made without fear ;  
26 Everyone that is high he regardeth,  
He is king of all the proud beasts.

xlii. And Job answered Jahweh and said :

- 2 I know that Thou canst do all things,  
And that no design is hidden from Thee ;  
3 “ Who is this that hideth counsel  
With words without knowledge ? ”  
Therefore I have uttered that which I understood not,  
Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not ;  
4 Hear, I pray, and I will speak,  
“ I will question thee, and do thou let me know ”—  
5 I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear,  
But now, mine eye hath seen Thee ;  
6 Therefore I repudiate . . . . .  
And repent on dust and ashes.

#### CRITICAL NOTES.

xl. 1a. 1. הָרַב (Vulg. Targ. Sym.). M T הָרַב. 2a. 1. יָסוּר (Vulg. Theod.), or יָוֶסֶר (Targ.). M T יָסוּר. 12a. 1. גְּבוּהָה. M T גָּאָה (cf. 11b.). 23b. omit אֵל ; 1. מִי הוּא. M T פִּיהוּ. 24a. 1. בְּמַעֲוֹנֹו. M T בְּעֵינָיו. xli. 1b. 1. נָם (ה dittogr.). M T אֵל מֵרָאִיו (cf. Syr. Sym.). M T אֵל מֵרָאִיו. 2a. 1. הָגַם. 3a. 1. וַיִּשְׁלֶם (G.). M T וַאֲשֶׁלֶם. 4b. 1. וְרַב. M T וְרַבֵּר. 5b. 1. סְרִיוֹנֹו (G.). M T גְּבוּרוֹת. 6a. 1. פִּיו (Syr.) ? M T פָּנָיו. 7a. 1. גְּוָה. M T גָּאָה. 7b. 1. סָגְרוּ (Syr.) ? M T סָגֹר. 10a. 1. עֲטִישְׁתּוּ (G. Vulg. Targ.). M T עֲטִישְׁתּוּ. 12b. 1. וַאֲגָם (Vulg. Syr.). M T וַאֲגָמוּ. 17. transp. post xl. 18. 17b. 1. מִשְׁבְּרִים. M T מִשְׁבְּרִים. 17b. 1. יִתְחַבְּאוּ or יִתְחַוּ (Syr.). M T מְשִׁיגָהוּ. 18a. 1. תִּשְׁיָגְהוּ (G. Vulg. Targ.). M T תִּתְחַבְּאוּ. 21a. 1. בָּקָה (G.). M T בָּקָשׁ (cf. 20b.). 1. נָחֵשֶׁב לוֹ. M T נָחֵשְׁבוּ. xlii. 3b. insert בְּמִלִּין (G. Syr. cf. xxxviii. 2).



## COMMENTARY.

2-9. Job admits his inability to answer Jahweh's questions, and the latter begins the new theme—the omnipotence of God.

2. Does Job confess his inability to answer? Or is he prepared to answer these questions? *He that contendeth*. This is the reading of Vulg. Targ. Symm., and forms a perfect parallel to 'he that argueth with.' Hebrew makes 'contend' the principal verb: 'will he that cavilleth contend?' The noun is not found elsewhere. *Give way* or yield. So Vulg. The word may also be translated 'will he be corrected?' (Targ.), or 'will he be rebellious?' The context is in favour of the Vulgate.

3. This verse, like verse 6, stands outside the metrical arrangement.

4. Job has been convinced of his own nothingness, at least in regard to knowledge. With 4b *cf.* xxi. 5; xxix. 9.

5. *Once . . . twice*, i.e. several times, or too often. *Cf.* 1 Sam. xi. 11; 1 K. xvii. 12. *I will not answer*. Dhorme follows Bottcher's conjecture and reads 'I will not repeat.' But the text is confirmed by 2b.

6. = xxxviii. 1.

7. = xxxviii. 3.

8. Jahweh now passes on from the general question of the direction of the universe to the specific question of the treatment of the just and the wicked. Job complained that God, by failing to intervene in judgment, permits the just to suffer and the wicked to prosper (*cf.* xxiv. 1ff). He makes void God's judgment, i.e. he condemns God's manner of dealing with the wicked. Has he a more effective method of dealing with them himself?

9. He has already confessed that he is of little account compared with God as regards knowledge; perhaps he is equal to God in power? *An arm*, the symbol of might (xxii. 8). *Thunder*, the most striking outward manifestation of God's power (xxxvii. 2-5).

10-14. Let Job then assume the place of God, and show his power by the sudden overthrow of the wicked.

10. Assume the outward emblems of your power. *Glory and state*. In Ps. xxi. 6; xlv. 4, the attributes of the king, in Ps. xcvi. 6; civ. 1, attributes of God.

11. *Shed abroad*. The same verb is used in xxxvii. 11 of the cloud 'pouring out' lightning. Job is to use the same agents to manifest his wrath as God. *Look upon*. Job has complained that God does not see the wicked, and so they are allowed to prosper (xxiv. 17). Let Job make no such mistake!

12. Everyone that is *high*. The Hebrew has 'proud' as 11b. This is probably due to a scribal error. *In their place*, i.e. suddenly, *cf.* xxxiv. 26.

13. *The dust . . . hidden world*, i.e. the grave and Sheol. *Bind their faces*, i.e. imprison their persons. 'Their faces' is equivalent

to 'their persons' = 'them.' (Cf. Ps. xlii. 5, 11, xliii. 5; Prov. vii. 15).

14. If Job can prove his power in this way, by doing what he claims God has left undone, God will acknowledge that he is His equal. *Thy right hand*, thy own unaided power (Is. lix. 16; lxiii. 5; Ps. xcvi. 1).

15-19. The Behemoth is harmless, but his physical powers make him immune from attack.

15. *The Behemoth*. The word is the plural of the word for 'beast,' probably a plural of majesty = the beast *par excellence*. There is no doubt that the reference is to the hippopotamus, which, like the crocodile described in 25ff, was well-known in Egypt (cf. Herod. ii. 68-71; Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* viii. 25-26; 37-39). *Which I made*. These words are not in the Greek, and are regarded by many as an interpolation due to Ps. civ. 26 (cf. Dhorme). But their absence from the Greek is no criterion, and without them 'with thee' is meaningless. *With thee*, i.e. as well as thee (cf. ix. 14; x. 17; xvi. 21). The point is that the Behemoth and Job are alike God's creatures. *Grass like the ox*. He is not the enemy of other animals like the lion, but lives on grass (cf. Is. xi. 7: 'the lion shall eat grass like the ox').

16. His sides and his belly. As the loins were proverbially the seat of strength (Ps. lxxix. 24; Nah. ii. 2 Deut. xxxiii. 11), the meaning is not, as usually, translated 'his strength is in his loins,' but 'his strength *which is* in his loins.' He calls attention to the immensity of his strength. *Muscles*. The Greek, Targ. and Vulg. translate 'navel' (cf. Ez. xvi. 4; Cant. vii. 3); but the plural form, as well as the context is against this.

17. His tail and his thighs. The tail of the hippopotamus is short, hairless, very thick near the root, and resemblance to a cedar lies not in its size, but in its muscular stiffness. *Is firm*. The precise meaning is doubtful. Gr. Syr. translate 'he lifts up'; Vulg. '*stringit*.' Modern critics trace the word to an Arabic root meaning 'to bend' (cf. Gray), or to another root meaning 'to remain,' i.e. to be firm (cf. Ball).

18. His bones and ribs. In the Hebrew both words mean 'his bones.' But the terms of comparison ('*tubes . . . bars*') make it probable that the first refers to the bones of the limbs, the second to the framework of the body.

xli. 17. This verse which, in its present context, interrupts the description of the hardness of the flesh of the crocodile, should probably be inserted here. It forms a fitting climax to the description, as it shows the helplessness of men when faced by such a monster. It has the same part in the description of the Behemoth, that xli. 1-3 has in the description of the Leviathan. Moreover, as we shall see presently, it enables us to give a reasonable interpretation to verse 19. '*The mighty*,' i.e. even the most valiant of men (Ex. xv. 15; xvii. 13). *And terror-stricken* (cf. Vulg. *territi*). The text has 'from breakings,' which Vulg. has interpreted as 'breakings of the spirit.' The noun is used in this sense in Prov. xv. 4 and Is. lxv. 14; and the verb in Ps. lxxix. 21;

cxlvii. 3. But it may mean 'breakings' in the lit. sense = 'wounds.' *Hide*. The usual meaning of the word is 'to sin'; but the primary meaning is 'to miss,' and from this critics deduce the meaning 'are confused' and 'retire.' But it remains very doubtful, and the meaning would be much improved by a slight change, which would give the word 'hide themselves.' Syr. has 'are dismayed.'

19. The mention of the name of 'God' here, as in xxxix. 17, is remarkable, considering that God himself is the speaker. But the difficulty disappears if xli. 17 preceded. The words, in this case, are those uttered by the 'mighty' at the appearance of the monster. *Chief of the ways of God*. The 'ways' are the creative work of God (Prov. viii. 22 cf. xxvi. 14). The Behemoth is the 'first,' i.e. not the first in time, but the chief, the crowning achievement of God's creation. The second clause of this verse has given considerable difficulty to commentators. Most critics change the text completely and read: 'who was made ruler of his fellows' (Giesebrecht, Duhm, Peake, Dhorme, etc.). But xli. 34 assigns this place to the Leviathan. Here again the insertion of xli. 17 removes all difficulty. The feelings of the 'mighty' are like those of the friends of Job according to Elihu: 'God shall conquer him and not man' (xxxii. 13). No human weapon can pierce the Behemoth, his Creator alone can vanquish him.

20-24. The habits of the Behemoth. He lies in the swamps by the river; he is immune from danger by the flood, and from capture by men.

20. Although he feeds on grass, his home is not, like that of other animals, in the pasture lands, but in the swamps by the river. *Food*, lit. 'produce' (Lev. xxvi. 4; Ps. lxxvii. 7).

21. This is best taken as the principal clause of the sentence begun in 20. His favourite haunt is among the lotus, the reeds, the willows of the riverbank. *The reed*, the papyrus, which grows in abundance along the bank of the Nile. Cf. Ps. lxxviii. 31, where Egypt is called, figuratively, 'the beast of the reeds.' Bochart quotes Ammian. Marc. *'inter arundines celsas et squalentes nimia densitate haec bellua cubilia ponit'* (xxii. 15).

22. The lotus shades him from the sun's heat, the poplars form a hedge about him.

23. Another animal in such an environment would run the risk of being caught by the overflow of the river. He is quite at home in the water. *A Jordan*, i.e. a stream with a swift and dangerous current like the Jordan. The last words of the verse 'into his mouth' make the verse too long. They are probably a corruption of the original 'who is he' which began the next verse (Duhm, Dhorme, Peters).

24. *In his lair*. The Hebrew is 'in or by his eyes.' This is supposed (Dhorme) to refer to the practice referred to by Herodotus of blinding his eyes with clay (Herod. ii. 70). The text, however, implies that the reference is to something which cannot

be done. Others take 'in his eyes' to mean 'while he is on the watch' (Gray). This too is opposed to the context; for the whole description implies that he cannot be overcome whether he is on the watch or not. Peters emends the text to 'by his teeth.' A slightly different reading would give 'in his lair.' The whole strophe deals with the sleeping quarters of the Behemoth, and the previous verse spoke of the danger of an unforeseen rise of the water. Another danger which might be likely to threaten him in his sleep is his capture by man. The piercing of the nose after the capture is with a view to leading him about as a captive (*cf.* 26ff).

25-30. The Leviathan. Can Job catch the Leviathan like a fish? When caught, can he be led about? Will he beg mercy of the captor? Can he be made a slave? Or a plaything? Or can he be carved up and sold?

25. *Leviathan*. From the description which follows (xli. 4ff) there can be no doubt that the crocodile is meant. The name Leviathan has been chosen because the author desired to institute a comparison between the sea-monster so formidable to men, and the great monster of Chaos, vanquished by God before the creation (*cf.* iii. 8). The crocodile, like the hippopotamus, is a characteristic Egyptian animal: but there is evidence that the species was at one time found in Palestine also (*cf.* the name *Crocodilon* for a river in Palestine in Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* v. 17). For references to crocodiles in more recent times see *P.E.F., Quarterly Statement*, Oct. 1920. *Or press down*. This apparently means that as the hook is swallowed the line is made taut, and so presses down the tongue. Duhm and Peake take it to refer to leading the animal about with a cord fastened to the lower jaw. This however anticipates verse 26.

26. When caught, can he be led about like a prisoner? Some take the verse to mean the method of carrying fish when caught. The objection to this is that the crocodile is supposed to be still alive. The figure in 27-28 is that of a prisoner, and the same is probably true here. *Cord*, lit. 'a reed,' i.e. a rope made of rushes. *Hook*. The word strictly means a briar or thorn; but in 2 Chr. xxxiii. 11; *Ezech.* xix. 4; *xxix.* 4; *Is.* xxxvii. 29, it is used of a hook for holding captives. The *hook* was in the captive's nose, and to it the *cord* was attached.

27. Will he plead for mercy like a prisoner? *Tender words*, i.e. for the purpose of appeasing you (*cf.* *Prov.* xv. 1; *xxv.* 15).

28. Will he agree to be your slave? *For ever*, i.e. for life (*cf.* *Deut.* xv. 17; *1 Sam.* xxvii. 12).

29. Can he be made a playmate for your children? Bochart quotes Catullus: *passer deliciae meae puellae* (*Hieroz.* II. 772).

30. Can it be carved up and sold? He now returns to the figure of verse 25. *Companies*, i.e. the groups of fishermen associated together to man each fishing boat (*cf.* *Luke.* v. 10). One will not find fishermen haggling about the price of crocodiles in the market-place. The *merchants* are those to whom the fishermen sell the fish. The crocodile is not an article of traffic.

31-xli. 3. Can he be fought with spears? Even the bravest cannot withstand him. Who then can stand before God?

31. In the previous strophe there is question of the capture of the crocodile by hook and line; here there is question of hunting him like a wild beast with spears and harpoons. *Barbs*. Occurs only here. Probably a spear or dart, hurled at the animal from a distance. The parallel expression is undoubtedly a *harpoon*, which is often represented in Egyptian pictures of the chase. The Vulgate took the words to refer to fishing-boats (*gurgustium piscium*).

32. A mere touch is sufficient to rouse his fury. After one such experience, his assailant will have a conflict which he will never forget, and will not be likely to provoke another. The imperatives here are equivalent to a conditional clause (*cf.* Prov. xx. 13).

xli. 1. *Thy hope*. The Hebrew has '*his* hope,' but there is no antecedent for '*his*.' Dhorme supplies it by placing verse 2 before 1; but it is impossible to separate 2 from 3. It is better, with one MS. and Syr. to read '*thy* hope.' The second part of the verse likewise presents difficulty. The Hebrew '*Shall not one be cast down at the sight of him?*' is open to serious objection. A change of pointing gives the text translated above. *Even a mighty man*. The same word as that used in xli. 17 in a similar statement about the Behemoth (see above). The interrogative particle should be omitted; it is due to repetition of the final letter of 1a. *At the sight of him*, *cf.* 1 Sam. xvi. 12; Nah. iii. 6; Job xxxiii. 21.

2. The Hebrew reads: '*He is not cruel (fierce) when one rouseth him.*' The translation '*there is none so rash (or bold) as to rouse him up*' (Peters, *cf.* Vulg.) is not correct. The Hebrew word means '*cruel*,' and suits the animal, rather than his human assailant; besides, the form of negative used is against this view. *Before My face*. If not even the bravest can stand before the Leviathan, who can stand before God? This and the next verse give us the reason for the introduction of the Behemoth and Leviathan. These are mere creatures of God, yet they defy the power of the mightiest among men, and Job also feels helpless against them. How then can he dare to challenge the Creator, and claim to meet Him on equal terms? (*Cf.* xl. 9-10). Many critics prefer the reading '*before his face*' (Targ. and 27 MSS.). But all the other Versions agree with the Hebrew, and in the next verse the evidence for the first person is without exception. So understood the clause would be a mere repetition of verse 1b.

3. There is a vital difference between the Hebrew and the Greek of 3a. The Greek continues the thought of 2b: '*Who ever confronted me, and was safe?*' The Hebrew is '*Who ever came before me (with a gift), that I should repay?*' That is, man cannot bestow a gift on God (*cf.* xxxv. 7), for the whole universe is his. The verse understood in this sense is alluded to by St. Paul, in Rom. xi. 35. But this introduces a thought alien to the context, and critics generally prefer the Greek reading. The second clause then means that none can escape from the

power of God, for the whole universe is His, and His power extends to the most remote parts of it (*cf.* Ps. cxxxix. 8-12).

4-9. The Leviathan's armour, his breast, jaws and back.

4. He now proceeds to describe the Leviathan in detail—his individual members, his strength, the marvellous arrangement of the different parts. *The greatness of his strength.* The Hebrew has '*and a word of his strength*,' i.e. the account of his strength. *The grace of his form.* Some critics object that the crocodile is not remarkable for grace of form, and so they emend the text. But by 'grace' is meant nothing more than the marvellous arrangement of the different parts.

5. His breast. The thick skin and the scales of the crocodile are compared to a tunic and doublet. The opening ('face') of the tunic, and the 'entrance' of the doublet are the front. *Doublet.* Hebrew has 'his double bridle,' which must be taken to mean his upper and lower jaws. But as these are referred to in the next verse, this is unlikely. The emendation 'double breastplate,' suggested by the Greek, is generally accepted.

6. His head. *The doors of his face* are the upper and lower jaws. For 'face' Syriac has 'mouth,' which some prefer.

7. His back. The scales of his back are compared to lines of shields, and to the impressions of a seal on clay. *Lines of shields*, lit. 'channels of shields.' The scales are hard and horny, and extend in rows along the back; the 'channels' are the depressions between the rows. The second clause introduces a new simile: each scale is like the impression of a seal on clay.

8. The scales fit close together.

10-14. His eyes, mouth, nostrils, breath, neck.

10. *His sneezing.* As the verb is singular, we should read the singular of the noun as Gr. Vulg. Targ. When the animal sneezed, it scattered a shower of spray which sparkled in the sun. *Eyelids of the dawn*, *cf.* iii. 9. The parallelism shows that the reference is to the flashing of the eyes as they appear over the water. The Egyptians themselves used the eyes of the crocodile as a symbol of dawn, because they appeared over the surface of the water, while the rest of the animal was still submerged.

11. As the animal breaks the surface, his breath is expelled with force through mouth and nose, and with it goes spray which sparkles in the sunlight.

12. *A pot . . . boiling.* Hebrew: 'a pot blown upon and rushes.' If the text is right, this would mean, apparently, the combination of steam with the smoke of the rushes which form the fuel. But Syriac and Vulg. suggest a slightly different reading, viz., 'boiling.'

13. The smoke (12) and the sparks (11) are caused by the breath of the animal.

14. The appearance of the animal strikes terror into those who see it (*cf.* xli. 1).

15-21. The hardness of his flesh is such that no weapon can pierce it.

15. *Flakes* of his flesh. Having completed the description of his external appearance, he now describes the flesh itself. Unlike other animals, his flesh is solid and immovable, and, as the following verses explain, impenetrable.

16. The repetition of the word 'firm' **three times** heightens the effect. The *nether mill-stone* was always larger and heavier, and often made of harder stone than the upper millstone.

17. This verse interrupts the description of the hardness of the flesh of the crocodile which is begun in 15-16 and continued in 18-21. It repeats what has been said in 1-3. It is only by drastic emendation that the verse can be made to fit into the present context, and as we have seen, it is just what is required to complete the description of the Behemoth in xl. 15ff.

18. Weapons are useless against him. The two words translated 'dart' and 'lance' occur only here, and the meaning is not certain.

19. Iron and bronze are no more effective than straw or rotten wood.

20. Arrows and sling-stones. *Cannot pierce*. The usual meaning of the word is 'flee'; hence it is usually translated 'cannot make him flee.' But Ex. xxxvi. 33, xxvi. 28 are sufficient evidence that the root had likewise the meaning 'pierce,' which is more suitable here. *Sling-stones* create as little impression as a speck of dust, or straw. The connection would probably be improved if 19 and 20 were transposed.

21. *A club*. The word occurs only here. *Like a reed*. Hebrew has 'like stubble.' As this simile is used above for 'sling-stones,' it is better to follow the Greek reading 'like a reed,' which is a more appropriate simile for a club.

22-26. His track on the mud and in the water.

22. The scales on the under part of his body are smaller than those on the back, but sharp, so that the surface is like that of the *threshing-sledge*. This consists of a flat wooden implement studded with sharp pieces of basalt or iron. The driver stands upon it, and it is drawn over the corn in the threshing-floor by oxen or a horse (*cf.* 2 Sam. xii. 31; Am. i. 3; Is. xxviii. 27). The Leviathan makes the same impression on the soft mud of the river-bank as a threshing-sledge.

23-24. He makes the water froth and foam as he swims along, and his track can be easily seen. *Perfume-pan*, the pot or pan in which the various ingredients used in making perfume were boiled. The disturbance of the water by the animal is like the perfume as it boils. The image may have been chosen because the crocodile actually diffuses a musk-like scent. The *sea* and the *deep* here refer to the Nile (Is. xix. 5; Nah. iii. 8).

25. He has no rival on the earth, and he fears nothing.

26. He has to pay homage to none, he is king over all. *He*

*regardeth*, i.e. with indifference. He is not compelled to show respect to any. *Proud beasts*, lit. 'sons of pride' (cf. xxviii. 8).

xlii. 2-6. Job acknowledges the marvellous power and wisdom of God.

2. This brief reply refers to both of Jahweh's speeches. The general statement in verse 2 is expanded in the following verses; 3 deals with God's wisdom (2b), 4-5 with His power (2a).

3. This verse is practically identical with xxxviii. 2, and is generally regarded as a marginal note. But it is difficult to see why a glossator should have introduced it. A plausible explanation may be given of the quotation here and in verse 4. Job includes in his reply a reference to the two speeches of Jahweh; the reply to the first (on the Wisdom of God) is prefaced by a quotation from God's challenge to him (xxxviii. 2), his reply to the second (on the power of God) is prefaced by a quotation from God's second challenge (xli. 7).

3c-d. Reply to Jahweh's first speech. He admits the justice of Jahweh's rebuke (xxxviii. 3), that he had spoken without knowledge. He had indeed been speaking of things beyond his knowledge.

4. Hear now my answer to the second challenge (viz. xli. 7).

5. I have become still more firmly convinced of God's omnipotence. *Hearing of the ear*. My belief was formerly founded on hearsay evidence; now it is founded on personal knowledge. *My eye hath seen thee*. There is no question of a vision of God. Job simply uses this figure to emphasise the deeper conviction he now possesses of the divine power. It is as if he had actually seen the great works of God, instead of learning of them by the tradition of the Fathers.

6. *I will repudiate*. The usual meaning of the word is 'reject,' 'despise'; but if this is the meaning here, we must assume that the object of the verb has dropped out. It is true that the Greek and Vulg. supply 'myself' as the object; but it is doubtful if this represents the original text. In vii. 5, 15, the same verb is used in the sense of 'melt,' 'pine away,' and Dhorme takes the word in the same sense here. On the whole, it is better to suppose some words like 'my words' or 'my folly' have dropped out, as the metre would in this case be more regular.



SECTION V  
THE EPILOGUE  
CHAPTER XLII 7-16



## THE EPILOGUE

### CHAPTER XLII 7-16

The Epilogue consists of two parts :

a) Jahweh's address to Eliphaz and the sequel. He condemns the three friends and commends Job. They can obtain pardon of their sin by Job's intercession after they have offered a sacrifice of expiation. These directions are obeyed ; their sin is forgiven and Job is restored to happiness (7-9, 10b).

b) Description of Job's condition after his restoration : his friends renew the old relations (10a, 11) ; his possessions are doubled, and he has a family as numerous as that which he lost (12-15) ; finally, after a long life of happiness, he dies ' old and full of days ' (16-17).

7 After Jahweh had spoken these words unto Job, Jahweh said unto Eliphaz the Temanite : " My wrath is kindled against thee and thy two friends ; for ye have not spoken that which is right concerning me as my servant Job hath. 8 Now, therefore, take unto you seven bullocks and seven rams, and go unto my servant Job, and offer for yourselves a holocaust, and let my servant Job pray for you ; for his plea will I accept, not to do aught unseemly to you. (*For ye have not spoken that which is right concerning me as my servant Job hath*). " 9 So Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Sophar the Namaathite went and did as Jahweh had commanded them ; and Jahweh accepted Job's plea [10b when he prayed for his friends, and he pardoned them their sin, and Jahweh increased everything that Job had twofold].

10 And Jahweh restored the fortunes of Job, () 11 and all his brethren and all his sisters and all his former acquaintances came and ate bread with him in his house ; and they condoled with him, and comforted him concerning all the evil which Jahweh had brought upon him, and each one gave him a piece of money or a gold ring.

12 And Jahweh blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. 13 And he had seven sons and three daughters; and he called the name of the first Jemimah, and the name of the-second Qesiah, and the name of the third Qeren-happuch. 15 And there were not found in all the land women as fair as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.

16 And after this, Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and his children's children, four generations. 17 And so Job died, old and full of days.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

xlii. 7. אֱלֹהֵי-נְכוֹנָה *cf.* iii. 22; I Sam. xxiii. 23. M T אֱלֹהֵי.  
 נְכוֹנָה. 8. כִּי אֶת־ (cf. 9b.). M T כִּי אֶת־ 8b. omit  
 אֵיבָה... לֹא כִי *cf.* 7. iob. transp. ante 10a. Add  
 וַיֵּשֶׁב קִהָם עִוָּנָם (G.).

## COMMENTARY.

7-9, 10b. Jahweh's address to Eliphaz, and the sequel.

7. Eliphaz is addressed as the elder of the three friends. (Cf. xvi. 7ff.) The condemnation of the friends and the approval of Job does not mean that everything they said was wrong, and everything said by Job was right. There is no doubt that the views which they expressed sprang from a sincere desire to defend the honour of God; but on the vital issue discussed they erred in accusing Job of sin. They calumniated him, and lied on God's behalf (xii. 7-11). They were not conscious that they were lying, but, according to Hebrew ideas, their action was sinful nevertheless, and demanded expiation. The approval of Job, likewise, must be understood in relation to the main theme of the discussion. No doubt he made use of language which was lacking in reverence towards God, and for this he has been rebuked by Jahweh in His speeches; but on the vital issue of the connection between sin and suffering Job was right. *Concerning Me.* The text has 'unto Me,' but as the friends have not addressed God directly, it is generally assumed that the particle 'unto' has been written for 'concerning.' The two particles are often confused. But it is also possible that the preposition has been used as in iii. 22 'unto truth' (cf. 1 Sam. xxiii. 23, where the same expression occurs in the sense of 'accurately' or 'with certainty'). In this case the clause should be read: 'For ye have not spoken *with truth* as My servant Job hath.'

8. Job has to act as intermediary, because their sin affected him directly. The number of the victims is symbolical (cf. Num. xxiii. 1, 4, 14, 29f). It was an exceptionally large sacrifice. *Offer for yourselves.* Greek (and Syr.) have 'he will offer for you.' *His plea etc.,* lit. 'his face will I lift up.' Job was the offended party, and only on his appeal would their sacrifice of expiation be accepted. *Unseemly,* lit. 'folly,' something degrading. The last clause repeats 7b, and is probably a gloss.

9. This verse (and 10b) gives a brief summary of the restoration of the friends to God's friendship and of Job's recovery of his happiness. The second part of verse 10 should probably be taken with this verse (cf. Driver, Szcziel). The Greek has an additional clause, 'And He pardoned them their sin,' which is probably original.

10a, 11. His friends who had abandoned him in his trouble now return (cf. xix. 13ff), express their sorrow for his troubles, and make him presents. *A piece of money* (Heb. *Qesitah*). In Jos. xxiv. 32, it is a mark of the patriarchal age. *A ring.* Rings were used as ornaments for the ears (Gen. xxxv. 4), or for the nose (Gen. xxiv. 47; Is. iii. 21).

12-15. His possessions and his family.

12-13. His possessions are doubled (as stated in verse 10); but the number of his children remains the same. The form of the number 'seven' is peculiar, and held by some to be a dual = 'twice seven.' In this case the number of the sons would also be doubled. But, more probably, the word is a blend of two forms, viz. 'sevenfold' and 'seven.'

14. *Jemimah*, according to Greek and Vulg. means 'day.' Modern critics prefer 'turtle-dove' after the Arabic *jamameh*, *Qesiah* was a kind of perfume (Ps. xlv. 8), and *Qeren-happuch* 'horn of antimony,' a black powder used by women to darken the eyes.

15. According to Num. xxvii. 8, the daughters inherited only when there were no sons. Job's daughters were specially privileged.

